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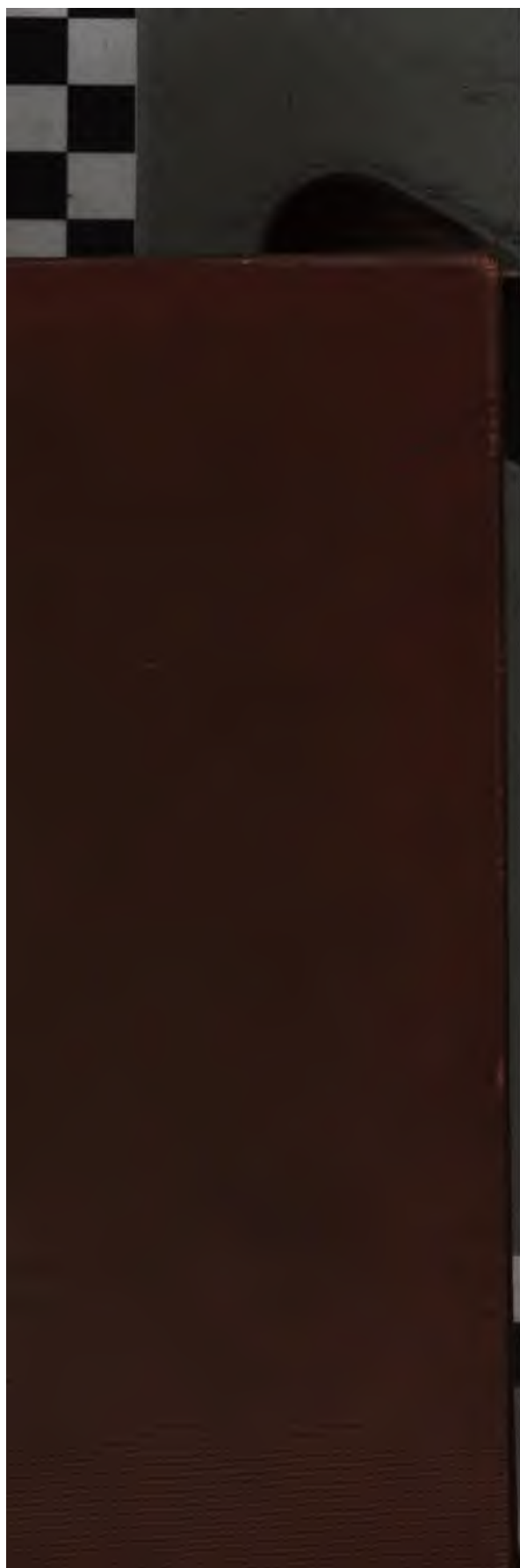
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THE KNIFE DROPPED FROM THE MAN'S HAND





THE KNIFE DROPPED FROM THE MAN'S HAND



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# The Guardsman

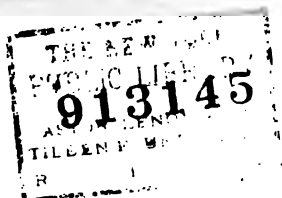
By

**HOMER GREENE**

*Author of "The Flag," "Pickett's Gap," etc.*



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# The Guardsman

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## CHAPTER I

**H**ALLOWE'EN! Religion, romance and mischief give life and color to the name. But in the mind of the American boy mischief is the predominating thought when the name is spoken. It is still a mystery why this particular night should have been chosen for indulgence in that form of juvenile pleasure which consists chiefly in removing loose property of Mr. Smith to the front yard of Mr. Jones. But that it has been so chosen no early promenader of the streets on the first morning in November will have the temerity to deny. Convincing evidence of such transfers may be seen in almost every block.

The boys of the city of Fairweather were not different from the boys of other American cities and villages in this respect. So it was that on Hallowe'en in the year 1909, groups of these young citizens, on mischief bent, were plainly visible to

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the discerning eye. In the well-lighted and peopled streets they paraded boisterously, through the darker ways they stole quietly with whispered words.

It was not a pleasant night to be out, rain had fallen during the day, and with the cessation of the storm had come a mist that shrouded the town, blurred the lights, and made the wet air heavy and lifeless.

A small group of boys, perhaps a half dozen, ranging in age from twelve to sixteen years, moved quietly up a side street and approached the business quarter of the city. If they had been in mischief the evidences of it were not visible among them. If they contemplated mischief, only a reader of minds could have discovered that fact.

It was past midnight. Few people were abroad. A loitering policeman stopped at a street-corner as the boys went by and carelessly scanned the group. They were not openly violating any law nor breaking any city ordinance, therefore it was not his duty to interfere with their proper use of the highway, nor to investigate their proposed activities. So he swung his club back against his forearm, hummed under his breath a tune that he used to know as a boy, and went placidly on about his business. But if he had been suspicious, and had stealthily followed them, he might have seen something that would have aroused within him a measur-

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of zeal in the performance of his undeniable duties. For, passing down the main street of the city, not three blocks distant from the corner where they had met the guardian of the public peace, these young American citizens came to a cobbler's shop on the door-casing of which hung a board sign inscribed with the words:

**"PUPPIES FOR SALE HERE."**

"That sign," said Halpert McCormack, the apparent leader of the group, "ought to come down. In my opinion a cobbler has no business to be selling puppies. 'Shoemaker, stick to your last!' That's a proverb we parsed in Miss Buskin's class this morning. What do you say, fellows?"

"Sure it ought to come down," was the immediate and unanimous response.

"Besides," added Little Dusty, the youngest boy in the company, "his puppies is no good anyway. My cousin Joe bought one off of him last week, and he can't even bark yet."

One member of the group, inclined to be facetious, inquired:

"Who can't bark? Joe or the dog?"

"Neither one of 'em," was the quick reply. "But the puppy's got fleas an' Joe ain't."

"That settles it," said Hal McCormack, gravely. "A man that will sell puppies with fleas on 'em deserves no consideration from us."

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"Right you are!" was the response. "Here goes!"

It took but a minute to cut the sign loose from its fastenings and to carry it around into a side street where darkness threw a protecting mantle over mischief.

One of the other boys turned to Hal. "Well," he said, "you told us to take it down; now you got to say what we do with it."

"Blessed if I know," replied Hal.

"Stick it up somewheres," suggested Little Dusty.

"Sure, stick it up somewheres," exclaimed the first boy, "but where?"

"We might fasten it to the sign o' Jim Nagel the butcher," responded Little Dusty.

Then a boy known as Slicker spoke up "Butchers don't sell puppies," he said, "they buy 'em. Folks'd think he was goin' out o' business if he put up a sign like that."

"Oh," commented Hal, "can that joke. It's got whiskers."

"Besides," continued Slicker, "I know a better stunt than that. We'll take it up to Barriscale's an' fasten it on the gate-post."

"Gee!" exclaimed Little Dusty. "My dad works at Barriscale's, and if Mr. Barriscale found out I had a hand in it, Pop might get fired."

"Well," replied Slicker, "nobody's goin' to

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know who had a hand in it. We ain't goin' to hire no brass band an' go around shoutin' what we done. Are we, Hal?"

"No," said Hal soberly. "This is secret business. No boy's got a right to tell on anybody but himself, not even if they skin him alive. I won't."

"Nor I," "Nor I." The response was unanimous and whole-hearted.

"I don't know about this Barriscale business, though," added Hal. "If Mr. Barriscale should get mad about it, he'd scour the city to find out who did it, and then he'd have us all put in jail. Young Ben isn't any easy proposition to butt up against, either."

"Oh, you're chicken-hearted!" exclaimed Slicker. "It's no fun to swipe things if you don't put 'em where folks don't like it. I say hang the puppy sign on the king's gate-post an' let the consekences take care o' theirselves. Am I right?"

"Right you are!" responded one member of the group after another. But Hal said: "Well, whatever you fellows say, goes. I'm game if you are. Where's your sign? Let me have it!"

He took the oblong board and concealed it under the capacious folds of his rain-coat. "Now," he added, "come on!"

So they started, heading again toward the main street of the city. Two blocks up that street they once more passed the loitering policeman on duty.

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If he had any suspicion that the outer garment of the leader of the group hid contraband property from his sight he did not mention it. But when they were well by he turned and called to them.

"You boys," he said, "have no business on the street this time o' night. I want you to go home, every one o' you."

"That's where we're headed for," replied Slicker; and with that the incident was closed.

Benjamin Barriscale, toward whose private property the boys were moving, was at the head of the principal industry of the city, operated by a corporation known as the Barriscale Manufacturing Company. He was reputed to be a man of great wealth, of unbending will, generous or domineering as best suited his purpose. To invade his premises at midnight, on a mischief-making errand, was therefore an adventure which called for both courage and caution. His mansion was a full half mile from the center of the city; a square, stately house set well back from the street in the midst of a spacious lawn. Two massive, ornamental gate posts guarded the entrance to the grounds, but the gates that swung between them were rarely closed. When the boys reached the place it was well past midnight and the lights in the electric lamps at the porch entrance had been extinguished. A single gleam showed faintly at an upper window; for the rest the darkness was complete save that a stre

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lamp, a block away, endeavored, quite ineffectually, to send its rays into the thick mist overhanging the Barriscale grounds. For the perpetration of undiscoverable mischief the night was ideal.

Midway of the journey the heavy board sign had been transferred from its hiding-place under Hal's rain-coat to the possession of two of the younger boys. Even to them it had grown increasingly substantial, and they were not loath now to relieve themselves of their burden.

After careful inspection of the gate-post it was the consensus of opinion that there was but one place on it where the sign could be conspicuously and safely fastened, and that was at the moulding near the top of the post.

And to hold it in place a piece of stout twine of sufficient length to pass across the face of the board and be tied behind the iron ornament at the summit was absolutely necessary. But the twine was immediately forthcoming. There was scarcely a boy in the company who had not that necessary equipment in one or another of his pockets. And the combined supply of the group, doubled and twisted and knotted, left nothing in the way of fastening material to be desired. So the puppy sign was hoisted into place, and two boys, at the risk of tumbling and breaking their necks, anchored it securely to the stone coping and the iron ornaments of Benjamin Barriscale's massive gate-post.



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But the incident was not yet quite closed. Before the mischief-makers were ready to turn their faces toward the street Slicker bethought himself of a supplementary task.

"Who's got some black crayon?" he asked of the company.

No one appeared to have black crayon, but Little Dusty was able to produce a stub of a carpenter's pencil which he had somewhere acquired, and he turned it over to the questioner.

"That's the goods," said Slicker. "Now hoist me up again."

Supported on the shoulders of two of his comrades, and steadying himself with his left hand, he scrawled on the lower face of the board, in large black letters:

"Buy young Ben. He's the only puppy left."

When he had been carefully lowered to the sidewalk Slicker told his inquiring companions what he had written.

"That was a mistake!" exclaimed Hal. "They'll have it in for us now, sure!"

"Let 'em," replied Slicker.

"But you don't know what you'll be up against."

"Maybe they'll tell me if I ask 'em," responded Slicker lightly.

Then Little Dusty spoke up.

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"I hope Ben sees it himself," said Dusty. "He'll know what some boys thinks of him."

"And we ain't the only ones that think that way, either," added another member of the group.

"You bet we ain't!" exclaimed still another. "I know lots o' fellows that's got no use for him at all."

It was very true that Benjamin Barriscale, Jr., was not especially popular with boys of his age. He was the only son of the wealthiest man in the city; he appreciated that fact, and was self-important accordingly. He was not offensively aristocratic or domineering, but he was unsocial, undemocratic, uncompanionable. He had his own group of friends, boys who followed him and flattered him, but he never seemed to inspire a spirit of true comradeship in any one.

Having at last finished the work in hand the Hallowe'en mischief-makers again faced toward the street, prepared now to follow the friendly advice of the down-town policeman.

But Slicker, with a low whistle, brought them to a sudden halt.

"We forgot somethin'," he said in a hoarse whisper.

"What?" was the unanimous inquiry.

"We ain't takin' anything away. We got to take as much as we bring. 'Twouldn't be fair to the rest o' the places we visited if we didn't do anything here but just leave a sign on a gate-post."

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"What is they to take?" inquired Little Dusty.

"I don't know," replied Slicker, "but we got to find somethin'. Come on back!"

Hal began to demur, but he was speedily overruled by the rest, and was quickly prevailed upon to accompany them. In single file, led by Slicker, they passed between the gate-posts and up the paved walk.

Then they stopped to listen. Out from the darkness at the left came gently the sound of splashing water. The boys knew, every one knew, that there was an ornamental fountain there. It had been a feature of the Barriscale lawn for many years. They also knew that, peering into the basin from the rim was the marble figure of a kneeling boy.

"Sh!" said Slicker. "What do you say if we cop the marble kid?"

"Great!" replied two of the boys. "Fine!" exclaimed Little Dusty. "But can we get her loose?"

"Sure we can. It ain't spiked down. I know how it sets."

Slicker had already started across the lawn, and the others followed.

But when they reached the fountain Hal again put in a word of protest.

"We mustn't do that," he said. "That thir cost money. S'pose we should drop it an' br  
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"Aw, we'll be careful. See! It's loose." And Slicker, moving the corner of the statue gently, proved his contention that it could be easily removed. Indeed, one stout boy could have lifted it from its resting place and carried it away. "Here you, Billy," added Slicker, "give us a lift."

"Sh!" whispered Little Dusty. "Somebody's comin'. Drop it an' duck!"

They left the statue and threw themselves prostrate on the grass to await the passing by of the person whose footsteps they had heard. It was a man, evidently belated and walking rapidly down the street. And he never dreamed that, less than forty feet away from him, a group of mischievous boys were about to commit an act of vandalism unlicensed and unwarranted even by the rules and customs of Hallowe'en. Removing the cobbler's sign had been taking sufficiently daring liberties with the property of other people, and fastening it to Mr. Barriscale's gate-post had been hardly a meritorious invasion of the rights of private persons, even though it had all been done by virtue of the license assumed to be granted to Hallowe'en revelers. But what was now contemplated went far beyond the limit of harmless mischief, and the project, if carried to completion, would become not only a violation of law, but of good manners and good morals as well. Yet Hal was the only one of the company who appeared to look upon it in this

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light. And when the sound of passing footsteps had died away in the distance, and bodies were raised from the grass, he again protested.

"We're getting in too deep," he whispered. "It isn't right. It isn't fair. It's carrying the thing too far."

"We won't carry it far," replied Slicker. "Just up street a ways an' drop it on somebody's porch."

"You know what I mean," insisted Hal. "I'm ready for fun, or mischief either, up to a certain limit. But this is going beyond the limit."

"Aw! you're a piker! If you don't like what we're goin' to do, you can take a sneak an' go home. Come on, fellows! Who's game?"

From the response it appeared that every one in the crowd was game except Hal. His judgment had been overruled and he made no further objection. But he did not "take a sneak."

"All right!" he said. "If you fellows think it's decent, and think you can get away with it, I'll go along; but I'm not crazy about the job, I can tell you."

That settled it. There was no other protest, and the process of removal began at once. Two boys one at each end, lifted the statue carefully from its resting place. But then an accident happened. Slicker, leaning too far toward the fountain in effort at assistance, tumbled inadvertently into basin.

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The boys, frightened at the mishap, lowered their burden to the grass, dropped on their knees, and awaited developments. It was possible that the noise of the splash might arouse the inmates of the house and lead to an investigation. Wet to his waist the victim of misplaced confidence in his own ability to preserve his balance, dragged himself slowly up across the rim of the basin, and joined his drooping comrades on the lawn. No one laughed. It was too serious a moment. Slicker himself was the first to speak.

"Gee!" he whispered through his chattering teeth, "that water's cold."

Then Hal had his innings.

"You're the guy," he said, "that better take a sneak for home, and get some dry duds on."

"Not on your life," was the reply. "I ain't no sugar lump. A drop o' water won't hurt me. I'm goin' to stay by till we land this stone cupid on somebody's porch."

"Whose porch?" asked Little Dusty.

"Well, I'll s-s-say, Jim Perry's. That's only two or three blocks away, and we ain't done nothin' for J-J-Jim yet to-night."

"That's right! We mustn't forget Jim."

Evidently the noise of Slicker's misadventure had aroused no one. Absolute silence still reigned in and about the Barriscale mansion. The boys got to their feet, again lifted the marble figure, and two



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of them bore it silently to the street and turned up the walk.

They passed the electric light at the corner in safety, went one more block, and then turned into a side street. It was very dark here. From two or three upper windows there were gleams of faint light, otherwise the darkness was impenetrable. Jim Perry lived midway of this block, but to locate his house in this kind of a night was next to impossible. It was not until one of the members of the group, known as Billy, whose home was just across the street, had gone back to the corner and counted the houses, that the boys felt at all sure of their exact location. But, having satisfied themselves that their selection of a resting-place for the "stone cupid" was fully justified, they lost no time in carrying their burden up the steps and depositing it on the Perry porch, much to the relief of Hal, who had been in constant fear lest some accident should happen to it.

And, having thus performed their duties and finished their night's adventures, the Hallowe'en marauders decided to disband and seek their respective homes.

"Remember," warned Slicker, "mum's the word. No fellow's got a right to squeal if they skin him alive."

"I won't peach," replied one. "Nor I," "Nor I," added others. But Hal said:

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"I'll tell on myself if I want to, but wild horses won't drag out of me anything about the rest of you."

"All right! That's fair!"

So, by ones and twos, they slipped away into the thick mist, leaving the marble figure of a kneeling boy reposing quietly on Jim Perry's front porch, and peering silently into a crack in the floor, as he had peered for many years at his own image mirrored in the water of the fountain on the Barriscale lawn.

A half hour later another group of boys, marching up the main residence street of the city, reached the mansion of Benjamin Barriscale. And in this group was Benjamin Barriscale, Jr. They were returning from an evening of Hallowe'en adventures not dissimilar to the adventures of the company that had preceded them. At the entrance to the grounds they stopped to say good-night to Ben, for they too had finished their evening of sport and were on their way home.

In the mist and darkness no one saw the sign with which the big gate-post at the left had been ornamented. That work of skill and art was destined not to be discovered until the light of morning should disclose its beauty and appropriateness to the passer-by.

The splashing of the water in the fountain on the lawn came musically to the ears of the tired strollers,



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but no one of them dreamed that the kneeling water-sprite was no longer peering from the rim of the basin into the liquid depth beneath him.

"Well, boys," said Ben, "I want the rest of you to do just as I'm going to do."

A shrill voice piped up:

"Do you know what you're goin' to do?"

"Sure I do," replied Ben; "I'm going up to the house and turn in so quick you can't see me do it."

"No, you're not. You're goin' with us."

"Where?"

"Well, you see, we haven't taken anything off of Jim Perry's porch yet. We always do that, every Hallowe'en, and if we pass him by this year he'd feel hurt."

"That's right!" added another boy. "We've got to do it. He'd never get over it if we didn't. Come on!"

But Ben hung back. "I'm too tired," he said. "You go ahead and swipe what you want to, but count me out."

Again the shrill, piping voice broke in:

"Oh, don't spoil the fun, Ben. Don't be a piker. You're the captain of the crew. You've got to go along to give orders. Come on!"

Thus adjured, Ben's resolution wavered. He was fond of being considered the leader of his group. He felt that he was born to command.

"All right," he said. "I'll go this once if you

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insist on it. But this is the last prank for to-night, you understand."

"Sure we understand."

Silently the boys left the stately entrance to the Barriscale mansion and moved up the street and around the corner, following unwittingly in the footsteps of those boys who had taken the same journey so short a time before.

This group also found it difficult to locate the Perry house in the thick mist and deep darkness that shrouded the side street. But, having at last satisfied themselves that they were on the right spot, they selected two of their number to mount the porch and seek for booty while the rest stood guard below.

The reconnoitering squad at once entered upon the performance of the duties assigned to them, but it was no easy task to find their way about in the pitch darkness that surrounded the Perry house.

Those who were waiting on the pavement heard a noise as of some one stumbling, and a smothered exclamation of surprise.

"What's the matter?" asked Ben, mounting half-way up the steps leading to the porch. "What is it?"

"Don't know," was the whispered reply. "Feels like stone. Heavy as the dickens!"

"Can you lift it?"

"Sure! The two of us have it now."

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"Then bring it along."

Bearing the burden between them, and slowly feeling their way, the committee of search descended to the sidewalk and halted.

"What is it, anyway?" asked one. "Let's feel of it," said another.

So the investigation began, but it resulted in no definite knowledge concerning the character of the prize. Eyes were of course useless, and fingers were of little less avail.

"It feels something like the boy on the rim of our fountain basin," said Ben after passing his hand carefully over the object from end to end. "But of course it can't be that. Anyway, now we've got it what are we going to do with it?"

"Carry it to Hal McCormack's and leave it on his porch," said the boy with the shrill voice. "Let him find out what it is, an' whose it is, an' carry it home to-morrow morning. I bet he's had plenty of fun to-night at somebody else's expense; now let's have a little fun at his expense."

"Well, don't waste time," cautioned Ben. "If you're going to take it to McCormack's, come along!"

But the boy who was bearing the heavy end of the burden hesitated.

"Say," he whispered, "can't one o' you fellows take my end? I barked my shin on the blamed thing up there, and it hurts."

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"Sure!" replied Ben. "Here; let me have it. Hurry up!"

But, in attempting to relieve his comrade, Ben failed to make his grasp secure; the end of the marble figure slipped from his hands, fell to the pavement, and was broken off almost midway of the statue, the remaining portion still secure in the grip of a boy named Bob.

The crash of the fall broke ominously into the stillness of the deserted street. For the first time that night the boys were really frightened.

"The jig's up!" whispered one of them, as the fog-muffled echoes died away.

"Let's leave the thing here on the walk an' skedaddle," said another.

"Let's take it back on the porch," said a third.

"No! I tell you, no!" exclaimed Ben. "We can't leave it here now. We've got to take it away."

He stooped and picked up the fragment nearest to him as he spoke. "Can you handle that other end alone, Bob?" he asked. "I've got this one; come on!"

Leading the way, he started off into the darkness, and his fellows followed him. There was little attempt now to soften their footsteps. It was primarily a question of haste.

At the corner of the street the boy with the shrill voice asked where they were going.

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"To Hal McCormack's, you simpleton!" answered Ben impatiently. "Isn't that where you said you wanted to go?"

"Yes."

"Then come along, and don't stop to ask fool questions."

The accident, and the thought of its possible consequences, had irritated him beyond measure, though he alone had been responsible for the breaking of the marble.

So to Hal McCormack's house, three blocks away, they went. No words were spoken. The matter had become too serious. The two boys carrying the separated fragments mounted the steps cautiously and deposited their several burdens on the porch floor.

"Now," said Ben, as he retraced his steps to the sidewalk, "beat it!"

They did not wait upon the order of their going, but went at once.

Up-stairs, in bed, Hal faintly heard a shuffling, scraping noise on the porch beneath his room, then, overcome by weariness, indifferent to all noises from whatever source they might proceed, he fell asleep.

## CHAPTER II

**W**HEN Hal McCormack came down to breakfast on the morning following Hallowe'en, he found that the other members of the family had almost completed their morning meal. But it was apparent, from the atmosphere surrounding the table, that something had gone wrong. His mother looked worried, his young sisters looked curious, and his father, who was captain of the local company of the National Guard, had a stern and military air.

"Halpert," said Captain McCormack, "before you take your seat at the table you will please go to the front porch and see what is there."

The request was such an unusual one that Hal stood for a moment wondering and motionless. But only for a moment. He had been accustomed from childhood to give ready obedience to his father's commands, and, without comment or question, he obeyed now. Two minutes later he again entered the dining-room.

"Well," questioned his father, "what did you find there?"

"Why," stammered the boy, "I found that marble statue; and it's broken in two."

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" So I discovered. Who broke it? "

" Honest, father, I don't know. We didn't. It was perfectly all right when we left it."

" Where did you leave it? "

" On Jim Perry's porch."

" When? "

" I guess it was about twelve o'clock."

" And where did you get it? "

" From Mr. Barriscale's lawn."

" I thought as much. I recognized it. Who helped you take it? "

For the first time Hal hesitated. Hitherto his answers had been prompt and frank. But he could not betray his companions. He had promised not to do so. He would not have done so if he had not promised.

" Well? " His father was looking at him sternly and questioningly. He knew that he must make some reply.

" Well," he said, " you see, it's this way. We all promised not to peach on each other. And, if you'd just as soon, I'd rather not tell."

" As you like about that. I'll not press the question. But, in that event, I take it that you are ready, yourself, to assume full responsibility for the damage that has been done to the statue."

" But, father, we didn't break it. We didn't bring it here."

" That may be. But you removed it from Mr.

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Barriscale's lawn. That was the primary offense. If you had not carried it away in the first place it would not have been broken."

"I suppose not."

"Of course not. And since you choose to assume full responsibility for the damage, you must make it right with Mr. Barriscale."

"I'd pay him in a minute but I haven't any money, except what little I've got in the bank."

"Then you must earn it; provided he is willing to make a cash settlement."

At this point Hal's mother broke into the conversation.

"I just knew something was going to happen," she wailed, "when you went out with those rough boys last night. Why couldn't you have stayed at home; or else gone with Emily and Lucy?"

"Oh, we didn't want any boys with us!" exclaimed Emily. "We just dressed up in old clothes and false faces, and went around visiting. We had the best time, and Mrs. Grimstone gave us doughnuts and ——"

"Emily, be still!" admonished Mrs. McCormack. "You wouldn't speak so lightly of your pleasures if you understood what a terrible misfortune has fallen on us."

Mr. McCormack had been smiling grimly at the interruption, but Hal had paid little attention to it. He was considering the course that lay before him.



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"I suppose," he said, "I'll have to take it back home."

"If you refer to the statue," replied Mr. McCormack, "I think undoubtedly that is the best course to pursue."

"And what else shall I do?"

"Well, you must go to see Mr. Barriscale, and acknowledge your offense, and submit to whatever penalty he imposes on you."

At the grim possibilities of such an interview Hal became really frightened. The idea of having to face Mr. Barriscale personally had not before occurred to him. He was willing to take the broken statuary home, and to pay for the damage done, in any way that was possible to him; but to present himself as an offender before the stern and autocratic Mr. Barriscale, that was a part of his punishment the thought of which struck terror to his heart. For the first time in his life the spirit of cowardice entered into his soul.

"I can't face Mr. Barriscale, father," he said. "He's too severe. He'd frighten me to death."

Captain McCormack straightened up in his chair and looked his son in the eyes.

"I've heard you say," he replied, "that when you reach the proper age you want to be a member of my company of the National Guard. Is that still true?"

"Why, yes; I think I'd like to be a soldier."

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"Well, a soldier must never be afraid to face whatever duty lies before him. His own comfort and safety must be a second consideration. He must always be brave enough to be fair and honorable. If he is not he has no business to be a soldier."

Hal had risen from the table, and he stood for a moment in serious thought. At last he said simply:

"I will go to see Mr. Barriscale."

That closed the incident so far as Captain McCormack was concerned. But Hal's mother was not so easily pacified. She continued alternately to pity and to blame her boy, and to make dire predictions of what was likely to happen to him when he should come in contact with Mr. Barriscale. And as for Hal's young sisters, they would not be appeased until they had drawn from him a full recital of the escapade of Hallowe'en. But he did not permit either his mother's lamentations or the volubility of his sisters to impede the carrying out of his programme. As it was Saturday morning and there was no school he was able to set about at once the performance of his most unwelcome task. He resurrected a boy's express wagon that he had used with delight a few years back, loaded the fragments of broken statuary carefully into it, covered them discreetly with a piece of burlap, and started out on his journey to the Barriscale mansion.

Two blocks from home he ran unexpectedly into

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Slicker, who stood for a moment gazing at him and his outfit in wild-eyed astonishment.

"What you got there?" asked Slicker.

"Stolen goods," replied Hal sententiously.

"What you mean stolen goods? It ain't the stone cupid, is it?"

"Yes."

"Where you takin' him?"

"Back home."

"Perry make you take it back?"

"No."

"Who did then?"

"My father."

"How'd he come to know about it? Who peached?"

Hal decided to throw off his reserve and explain.

"Well, you see, after we left the thing on Perry's porch some other crowd must have come along and picked it up and brought it to our house. That wouldn't have been so bad, but those fellows, whoever they were, broke it."

"Gee whiz! Is it bust bad?"

"Yes. Broke in two. Ruined."

"That's a crime! Let's see!"

Slicker lifted the burlap carefully and inspected the broken image.

"It's done for," he said as he replaced the covering. "What you takin' it back for? It ain't no good now."

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"My father thought I'd better."

"What you goin' to do about it?"

"I've got to stand the damage."

"Why, you didn't break it."

"I know. But I helped carry it off; and if it hadn't been carried off it wouldn't have been broken."

"I guess that's right, too. But you didn't snitch it alone. What about the rest of us?"

"I didn't give any of you away. I shouldered the whole job."

Slicker stood for a moment in deep contemplation. Finally he said:

"That's mighty decent, Hal; and you're a regular brick. But it don't go down with me. We'll cut the rest of the fellows out and you and me'll share the consequences. We'll go fifty-fifty on it."

"No; you don't have to do that, Slicker."

"I know I don't; but I'm goin' to. It's settled. Come on!"

He took hold of one side of the cross-piece of the handle of the wagon and motioned to his companion to take hold of the other side. Hal knew that when Slicker had made up his mind to do a thing there was no turning him. So he acquiesced in the plan. And together the two boys dragged their unlovely load toward its destination.

Two blocks farther on they met Hal's aunt, Miss

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Sarah Halpert, a lady approaching middle age, of decided opinions about persons and things, prominent in the civic and social life of the city, keen in intellect, quick in resourcefulness.

Hal would not, at this moment, have willingly come in contact with her. When he saw her approaching he looked about for some means of escape, but they were in the middle of a block, and the meeting was inevitable.

"What's all this about?" she inquired as she came up to them. "Are you boys returning stolen goods this morning?"

"That's about it, Aunt Sarah," replied Hal.

"Well," she continued, "if I'd caught the little rascals that left a load of turnips in my front yard last night, they'd have thought the day of judgment had come, sure enough. Who's this other boy? What's your name, young man?" Then, before the "other boy" could reply, she answered her own question. "Oh, you're Slicker. You're the boy that fastened a tick-tack on Jerry Minahan's window, aren't you?"

Slicker colored a little and acknowledged that he had committed the offense named.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself!" she said. But her eyes twinkled so as she spoke that Slicker knew she was not angry with him.

"We're in a hurry," explained Hal. "We've got to be going."

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He started on, dragging both the wagon and his team-mate in his haste to escape. But she held up a warning hand.

"None of that!" she exclaimed. "I know better. I want to know what you've got there, where you got it, and where you're taking it."

Hal knew, from long experience, that evasion was out of the question, and that it would be utterly useless to deny her request. So, with Slicker nodding occasional confirmation, he gave her the whole story. She did not interrupt him during the recital. But when he had finished, she said:

"Well, I don't envy you your job. I guess I'm the only person in town who isn't afraid of Benjamin Barriscale. I don't know what he'll do to you, but, whatever it is, you'll richly deserve it, both of you. I hope he'll give it to you, good and plenty. The idea of stealing a thing like that! What put it into your crazy heads, anyway?"

"It was my idea, Miss Halpert," responded Slicker. "Hal, he didn't want to do it. I got him into this trouble. I'm goin' to help him out if I can."

"Good boy!" she replied. "That's the stuff! You've both got the making of men in you, once you get over this foolish age. Now trot along and do your duty. And you, Hal, let me know this afternoon how it comes out."

She started on, and the boys bent again to their

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task; but before she had gone many steps she turned and called:

"Hal! come here a minute. I want to speak to you."

When the boy reached her side she asked:

"Have you got any money?"

"Just a few dollars in the savings bank," replied Hal.

"My case exactly. Maybe Mr. Barriscale will want money damages. If he does, don't you ask your father for the cash, nor your mother. Do you hear me? I won't give you the money. Don't dream it! But I guess I can fix it up so you can earn some. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Aunt Sarah, and thank you; but I wouldn't——"

"Yes, you would. You do as I tell you. Now go on about your business."

She turned and swept up the street, and Hal and Slicker again took up the line of march toward the Barriscale mansion. Avoiding the busy streets, they went a roundabout way, until, at last, they reached their destination. There they lifted the broken marble from the wagon and, each boy carrying his portion, they deposited it on its base at the rim of the fountain from which it had been so rudely removed the night before.

No one about the premises intercepted or interfered with them. Apparently no one saw them save

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one passer-by who stopped for a moment to watch them curiously, and then, with a quizzical smile on his face, went on about his business.

"Well," said Slicker, when they had returned safely to the sidewalk, "what's the next move?"

"The next move," replied Hal, "is to face Mr. Barriscale."

"Gee whiz! That's a tough one."

"I know it's tough. But it's got to be done."

"Sure it has. It's the only proper thing to do. Might as well order harps for the glory land, though. They won't be enough left of us to make a decent dish-rag of when he gets through with us. Well, come along!"

"But you're not going."

"Sure I'm going."

"No, you're not. I won't stand for it. I won't take any other boy with me on this errand. If I'm alone I can face the music. If you go along it'll take the starch right out of me."

"Rats! I've got to take my share."

"I know how you feel. But you can help more by staying away. I've made up my mind."

For a moment Slicker looked earnestly at his companion to discover if possible whether he really meant what he was saying, and when he found that he did, he made no further effort to accompany him.

"All right!" he said. "You're the judge and jury. But don't forget that I wanted to go."



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"I won't forget it. There isn't another boy in the crowd would make that offer. But I'm going alone."

"Well, I'll take the buggy home anyway."

Slicker started back up the hill dragging the express wagon after him, and Hal faced toward the central city to meet whatever fate awaited him there.

The rain of the night before had not yet quite ceased, the skies were lowering, and mist still lay heavily on the town. Hal noticed as he came into the business portion of the city that in many of the stores and offices lights were burning to dispel the gloom. This was true also at the Barriscale plant. A hundred windows of the big buildings that faced the plaza were illuminated from within. But in Hal's mind the lights gave no cheerful aspect to the scene. They were like so many eyes trying to stare him out of countenance. It required a new mustering of courage to mount the steps that led to the office door and make his entrance there. The clerk who approached him to inquire as to the nature of his business said that Mr. Barriscale had not yet arrived. Hal turned away with a sense of temporary relief, left the building, crossed the plaza, and went back toward the central city. Just as he reached the corner of the main street he saw Mr. Barriscale's car turn and go down toward the factory. It pulled up in front of the big building, and

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the manufacturer descended from it and entered his office. But Hal did not immediately return. He reasoned that the head of the company would be very busy for a little while, getting his day's work started, and there would be a better chance to see him later.

It was a full half-hour afterward that he returned to the mills. The same clerk who had met him on his first visit told him that the president of the company was now in and asked him to give his name and to state the nature of his business.

"I am Halpert McCormack," was the reply. But his voice was so low and seemed so strangely weak that the young man was not able to hear it plainly above the hum of voices in the room, the clicking of typewriters, and the muffled roar of distant machinery.

"I am Halpert McCormack," repeated the boy. "I want to see Mr. Barriscale about taking away the marble figure from his fountain last night."

"Very well, wait here."

The clerk disappeared through a door marked "Private Office," and reappeared in a few moments and requested Hal to enter. So the midnight marauder found himself standing, cap in hand, in the presence of the great man of the city. Mr. Barriscale was seated at a table in the center of the room, and seemed to be absorbed in the scrutiny of a document he was holding in both hands. When

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he finally laid the paper down and looked at his visitor it was with no friendly gaze.

"Well," he inquired brusquely, "what's your errand?"

If the anticipation of this meeting had filled Hal's heart with foreboding, the reality was no less fear-compelling. Mr. Barriscale's presence was imposing, his manner was forbidding. Stern-eyed, square-jawed, formidable in every aspect, he bore the appearance of a man ready to crush any one who opposed his wish or refused to bend to his will. But when Hal replied his voice was firm and his speech was without hesitation.

"I'm the boy," he said, "who took the marble image away from your fountain last night, and it got broke, and I carried it back there this morning."

Mr. Barriscale's frown deepened, his heavy, clipped moustache bristled perceptibly, and a slight flush overspread his face. Evidently the subject was not an agreeable one to him.

"Who told you to come here?" he asked abruptly.

"My father," replied Hal.

"Who is your father?"

"Captain Lawrence McCormack; and my name is Halpert McCormack."

"Your father is a respectable citizen. How comes it that he has a night-prowler for a son?"

"I don't know, sir."

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"Who was with you on this job?"

"Some boy friends. I'd rather not tell their names. I want to be responsible for the whole thing myself."

"I see. Shielding your accomplices in crime. A very mistaken idea of magnanimity. But if you want to bear the brunt of this thing I'll accommodate you."

The flush in the big man's face grew deeper, and there was a perceptible note of anger in his voice. The outlook was indeed menacing.

"I want to bear the brunt of it," replied Hal.

"Very well!" Mr. Barriscale picked up a paper-knife and tapped on the table with it as he spoke, apparently for the purpose of emphasizing his words. "You admit that you entered my lawn under cover of darkness, without permission, for the purpose of removing my property?"

"Yes, sir!"

"And that you did take the marble figure from my fountain and carry it away and break it?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Are you aware that you have committed a crime?"

"I didn't know it was a crime, sir. I knew it was wrong, but we just did it for fun."

"Then let me enlighten you, young man. In trespassing on my lawn with evil intent you committed a misdemeanor, punishable by fine and im-

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prisonment. In breaking my statuary you are guilty of malicious mischief, also punishable by fine and imprisonment. In taking my property and carrying it away you are guilty of the crime of larceny and can be sent to state's prison for a term of years. What do you think of the situation?"

"I had not thought of it that way, sir."

Hal's voice began to show weakness, his face paled a little, and his knees began to tremble at this recital of his offenses against the law, and the possible punishment for them.

"Well," responded the big man in a voice plainly indicative of increasing anger, "you can think of it that way now. And perhaps you will also be willing to tell me now who your confederates in crime were." Mr. Barriscale tapped the table more vigorously with his paper-knife, straightened up in his chair, and became peremptory in his anger. "I will find out," he continued. "They shall all be treated as they deserve to be, every one of them. You say the statue was broken. Who broke it?"

"I don't know, sir."

Mr. Barriscale half rose from his chair, his face purple with passion.

"Don't evade my question, sir," he cried. "I'll have none of it! Answer me! Who broke the marble?"

"I did."

It was not Hal who spoke this time. The voice

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in reply came from a boy sitting at a desk in a far corner of the room. In his trepidation and excitement Hal had not before noticed him. The boy rose from his chair as he spoke and advanced toward the central figures in the conversation. It was Ben Barriscale, Jr. Heretofore there had been only a casual acquaintance between the two boys. They attended the same high school, but they were not in the same class, had seen little of each other, and had had no companionship.

It was evident that Mr. Barriscale was no less surprised at the interruption than was Hal himself. He sank back in his chair and the color went suddenly from his face.

"You!" he exclaimed; "you broke it? Were you with this crowd of midnight marauders?"

"No," was Ben's reply. "I wasn't. But I was with another crowd, and we were doing the same things. We found the statue on Jim Perry's porch. It was very dark and I didn't know what it was. We took it over to McCormack's, and I let it fall and it broke. I didn't know till this morning that it was our fountain figure."

Mr. Barriscale's anger seemed suddenly to have cooled. There was no sharpness or severity in his voice when he spoke again, only a note of reproof.

"That you didn't know whose property it was," he said, "is no excuse for your conduct. To remove things from Mr. Perry's porch is as reprehensible as

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it is to remove things from my lawn. I can't see but that you are both equally guilty."

"I think so myself, father," replied Ben. "And I'm ready to share any punishment that Hal gets."

Benjamin Barriscale, Sr., looked slowly from one boy to the other, and it was evident that he was in a quandary. For a full minute he was silent; but he resumed the nervous tapping on the table with his paper-knife. Finally he turned to Hal and asked:

"Where is the statue now?"

"Back on your fountain, sir," was the reply.

"You say it's broken?"

"Yes, sir. Broken in two."

"Then it's beyond repair, and you two boys shall pay for it."

He spoke firmly still, but quietly. He said nothing more about crimes, nor about penalties, nor about the state's prison. The question now appeared to be simply one of compensation.

"That piece of marble," he continued, after a moment of consideration, "was of considerable value."

He turned suddenly to Hal. "Have you any money?" he asked.

"No," replied the boy; "except a few dollars in the savings bank."

"Well, it doesn't matter. On second thought I'll not permit you to pay me money. Nor will I permit your father to pay for your misdeeds. You

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boys must work out your punishment. It will be no easy job. I intend that before you finish it you shall appreciate the sacredness of the rights that people have in their own property."

Again, for a minute, he was silent while the two boys stood apprehensively awaiting his decision. Then he turned again suddenly to Hal.

"Your father," he said, "is captain of the local company of state militia?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply, "he is."

"And it is a very honorable and responsible position. As president of the local Armory Board engaged in the erection of the new armory, I have come into frequent contact with him, and I have great respect for his ability, and for his willingness to be guided in this important military undertaking by men of greater business experience than his, and familiar with large affairs. I am sure he will approve of the sentence I am about to impose on you."

He spoke as though he were a judge sitting in the criminal courts, about to impose sentence on a convicted prisoner.

"Ben," he continued, turning to his son, "are you ready to share in the punishment I propose to provide for this young man?"

"I'm ready, father." The boy answered without hesitation, and with apparent frankness.

"Very well!"



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Mr. Barriscale pressed a button under the edge of his table, and a young woman entered the room with pencil and pad in her hand.

"Miss Lawranson," he said, "you will please take dictation."

She seated herself at the opposite side of the table from him, and, after a moment of consideration, he dictated the following letter:

"JAMES McCRAE,  
*Superintendent of Construction of the State Armory,  
Fairweather, Pa.*

*Dear Sir:*

You will do me a favor by employing two boys, Halpert McCormack and Benjamin Barriscale, Jr., at such laborious tasks as they are fitted to perform in and about the State Armory. Their hours will be from 7 to 8:45 in the morning, and from 4:15 to 6 in the afternoon, with a full day on Saturdays. You will please keep them at such labor until their combined wages, at the rate of one dollar each per day, and at the rate of two dollars per day for Saturdays, shall amount to the sum of sixty dollars, at which time you will kindly make a report to me, accompanied by the appropriate extracts from your time-sheets, and I will arrange, through the proper channels, for their compensation. They will report to you for service on Monday morning of the coming week.

Very truly yours,

BENJ. BARRISCALE,  
*President of the local Armory Board."*

Mr. Barriscale leaned back in his chair with a look of self-satisfaction on his face. He faced each boy in turn, and asked:

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"Are you content?"

And, when both boys had answered him in the affirmative, he said:

"Very well! Ben, you may return to your desk. McCormack, you may be excused."

Young Barriscale resumed his former position at the far side of the room, the great ironmaster plunged again into the mass of papers on his table, and Hal, after a moment of hesitation, bowed and turned away. He left the building, crossed the plaza, and turned up the side street toward the city's main thoroughfare. The ordeal had been passed, the punishment had been defined, but he did not quite know whether to congratulate himself on the lightness of his sentence or to rebel at the humiliation it might impose on him. One thing in connection with the incident was pleasant to think of, and that was young Ben's frank admission of his participation in the offense, and his willingness to share the punishment. It stamped him as a boy of character, even though he had been rated as something of a snob. Moreover, it was quite a relief to know that there would be no money for Captain McCormack to pay, even temporarily. Besides, there was to be no court proceeding, no criminal conviction, no term in the state's prison. Perhaps that was due to Mr. Barriscale's change of heart after he learned that his son was a participant in the mischief. Hal did not quite know. At any rate

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it was not so bad as it might have been, although he still had an uneasy feeling that his offense had been exaggerated, that he might find his punishment to be unduly severe, and that he had been saved from deeper distress and humiliation only by a fortunate accident.

When Hal announced at the dinner table that day that he had seen Mr. Barriscale, and when he had stated the nature of the punishment he was to undergo, he noticed a grim smile on the face of his father. But, beyond a passing comment on the fairness of Ben and on the equality of the sentence as between the two boys, Captain McCormack said little. Whatever his thoughts or opinions were on the subject he kept them judiciously to himself. He made some facetious remark, indeed, about the necessity for having early breakfasts thereafter; but, so far as the deeper aspects of the case were concerned, it was apparent that he had decided to let his son work the matter out for himself.

It was not so with Hal's mother, however. She was emphatic in her protests against the severity and humiliation of his punishment. She could not see why a boy's prank should be treated so seriously, even though it had ended in an unfortunate accident. She feared that early breakfasts would ruin her son's digestion, and that a month of hard labor with no opportunity for play would result in his becoming a confirmed invalid. Her lamentations,

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however, did not greatly affect Hal's composure. She had always loved and petted him and tried to shield him from the rough places in life, and it was but natural that she should take a somewhat exaggerated and pessimistic view of the present situation.

On the following Monday morning, at ten minutes before seven, Hal presented himself at the armory, ready for work. Ben Barriscale was already there, but Superintendent McCrae had not yet arrived. The building was practically completed and it was the interior finishing that was now, for the most part, occupying the attention of the workmen.

As Hal entered the large drill-hall he saw Ben standing on the farther side of it, and crossed over to meet him. He greeted him pleasantly, but the ironmaster's son was not responsive, and seemed to be in anything but a cheerful mood.

"Well," asked Hal in an effort to be companionable, "what do you suppose they'll put us at?"

"I don't know," was the blunt reply. "And I don't care much. Whatever the job is I'm sick of it already."

Hal tried to be encouraging. "That isn't the way to look at it," he protested. "We're into it, we've got to make the best of it. Maybe we can find a little sport in it after all. Let's try."

"You're welcome to work like a common laborer

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if you want to, and get what fun out of it you can. I don't fancy the prospect."

Ben turned away and started to cross the hall alone. But he evidently changed his mind, for he wheeled around and came back to where Hal was standing.

"Say," he asked abruptly, "was that your gang that put the sign on our gate-post Hallowe'en?"

"You mean the sign 'Puppies for sale'?"

"That's what I mean."

"Yes; that was our crowd."

"Was it you that wrote on that sign: 'Young Ben is the only puppy left'?"

"No; I didn't write it."

"Who did write it?"

"I don't choose to tell."

"Why not?"

"You know why not. Would you give another fellow away if you were in my place?"

"I would if he did as mean and contemptible a trick as that."

"I don't admit that it was mean and contemptible."

"Then you're ready to stand for it, are you?"

The voices of the two boys in controversy had attracted the attention of some workmen who were standing near, awaiting the blowing of the seven o'clock gong, and they moved over to the scene of the quarrel.

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"The stout one's Mr. Barriscale's son," said one of the men, "and the other one is Captain McCormack's boy. I know 'em both."

"Well," was the response, "they're both bluebloods; let 'em fight it out, an' see who's the best fellow."

By this time both boys were too excited to notice the gathering men or to hear their comments. Ben's voice had grown louder as his anger increased, his face was deeply flushed, and his eyes had a dangerous look in them.

"I'm ready," replied Hal, "to stand for anything my crowd did that night. That's why I'm the only one of 'em here this morning."

"Then I'll make you sorry you're here."

In a fit of uncontrollable passion Ben made a blind lunge at his companion in punishment, and by the very violence and suddenness of the onset he almost swept him off his feet. But Hal's lightness and agility stood him in good stead, and, after yielding for a moment, he braced himself for the contest and held his ground. He was the taller of the two boys, the more athletic and the more agile. But Ben's greater weight and stockiness gave him the advantage in the first onrush, and, had he been able skilfully to follow up the attack, his quick victory would have been a foregone conclusion. As it was, the combatants were not unequally matched.

The onlookers, augmented in numbers by other



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workmen who had been attracted to the scene, gathered now in the conventional ring about the fighters. The primal instinct, only veneered by centuries of civilization, showed itself in the avidity with which they gazed on the combat, and in the calls and cries of encouragement they gave, each to his individual favorite.

The boys were now struggling and writhing in each other's arms. A full minute they wrestled so; then came the fall. It was swift, sudden and disastrous. The crash of it echoed through the great, empty hall. In disentangling himself from the prone figure beneath him Ben met with no resistance. His antagonist lay with closed eyes, limp and insensible, on the armory floor. At this moment Superintendent McCrae came pushing his way through the narrow ring of spectators.

"What's all this about?" he asked. "What's happened?"

"It's a fight," some one answered. "The stout fellow put the other one to sleep."

The superintendent turned his gaze from the swiftly paling countenance of the boy on the floor to the hardly less colorless face of his victorious antagonist.

"A fight, is it!" he exclaimed. "Mayhap and it's a tragedy."

He knelt on the floor at Hal's side, felt of his wrists, and tore open his collar and jacket.

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"Here you, Bill!" he called, "run for some water. And you, Henry, telephone for a doctor, and get a cab. Who the dickens are these fellows, anyway?"

Ben began to stammer an answer, but before any intelligible words had left his mouth the superintendent interrupted him.

"Oh, I know!" he exclaimed. "You're Mr. Barriscale's son, and this is Captain McCormack's boy. I had the letter. Here, Bill, give me the water."

He poured a little from the glass into his hand and dashed it into Hal's face, and repeated the process twice. Then he began chafing the boy's wrists. Some one suggested that the victim be carried to a bench or chair.

"No," replied McCrae. "Let him lie here. He's better off on his back till the doctor comes. Some one lend me a jacket, though, to put under his head."

In a second Ben had stripped off his coat and handed it to the superintendent, who folded it and placed it gently under Hal's head.

The workmen, awed by the tragic result of the fight, began melting away, discussing as they went the possible cause of the quarrel and its probable results. At last, with the exception of one or two foremen and the superintendent, all the men were gone, and Ben stood, almost alone, by the side of his



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victim. He was stunned and awe-stricken. He had not dreamed that such a thing could happen.

"I didn't mean to knock him out," he said finally. "I wouldn't have hurt him like this for the world. What shall I do about it, Mr. McCrae?"

"Oh," was the reply, "just stick around here till the doctor comes, and he'll tell us all what to do. It's no' very bad, I guess. He's breathin' all right now."

The doctor was not long in coming. His office was but two blocks away, and the messenger who had been sent for him had made great haste. He examined the boy carefully, but found nothing wrong except that an area on the back of his head was already swollen and showed a marked abrasion. There was no fracture, however.

"It's a slight concussion," said the doctor. "Probably struck his head violently when he fell. He'll come to after a little, but I guess we'd better take him home."

The cab was already at the armory entrance, and McCrae and the doctor, between them, lifted the still unconscious boy and carried him to it. The motion seemed to rouse him, and he opened his eyes and began to mutter something about being responsible for what the crowd had done.

"You'd best go home," said McCrae, addressing Ben. "You won't be fit to work this morning anyway. If we need you I'll call you up. Oh, say;



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suppose you telephone to Captain McCormack that his boy is slightly hurt and we're takin' him home."

He squeezed his big body into the cab, which the doctor had already entered; and Hal, supported by the two men, was driven rapidly to his father's house.

### CHAPTER III

**W**HEN Ben reached home on the morning of the encounter at the armory he found his father still at breakfast. Mr. Barriscale looked up in surprise as his son entered the dining-room.

"What brings you back at this hour?" he inquired.

"We had a little accident up at the armory," was the reply, "and Mr. McCrae thought I'd better come home."

"So? What happened?"

Ben went around to his accustomed place at the table and seated himself.

"I don't want any more breakfast," he said to his mother who was already giving directions to the maid for serving him. "Why, father, you see it was this way. A crowd of fellows put that sign up on our gate-post Hallowe'en, about puppies for sale. You know. You saw it. It said I was the only puppy left."

Mr. Barriscale repressed a smile and replied:

"Yes, I saw it. What about it?"

"Well, Hal McCormack was in that crowd. I

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tried to get him to tell me who wrote that on it, and he wouldn't. He said he didn't do it himself, but he wouldn't tell me who did."

"Well?"

"He said he would take the responsibility for it; so I started in to give him a thrashing."

"He deserved it; I hope you gave him a good one."

Mr. Barriscale had not yet fully recovered from the unpleasant sensation of having been compelled to put his son on a par with a boy of the middle-class in the matter of punishment, and he was not at all averse to having the matter evened up in this way.

"I intended to," replied Ben; "and we clinched, and I threw him, and his head struck the floor pretty hard, I guess. Anyway, he was knocked unconscious, and Mr. McCrae called the doctor and they took him home."

Mr. Barriscale set his half-lifted cup of coffee back into the saucer and looked serious.

"How badly was he hurt?" he inquired. "Did the doctor say?"

"No. He said there was a slight concussion of the brain, but he couldn't tell what it would amount to."

Mr. Barriscale looked still more serious. "I'm afraid," he said, "that you've got yourself into trouble."

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"What shall I do about it?" inquired Ben, anxiously.

"Well, the least you can do, and probably the most at present, is to go to the boy's house and inquire about him, and offer apologies, and tender your services for anything you can do."

"I'm so sorry for his mother," broke in Mrs. Barriscale. "She's such a helpless little thing."

"That's the trouble with going to the house," replied Ben. "I'd hate to meet her and have to explain. She'd never understand in the world."

"I'll go myself to see her," said Mrs. Barriscale. "I think I can make it all right with her."

But the ironmaster, ignoring his wife's offer, turned peremptorily to Ben.

"You do as I tell you," he commanded. "You go to McCormack's house, and to whomever meets you there you express your regret for the occurrence, and offer your services. Go after school to-day."

That settled it. Mr. Barriscale's wish in his family circle was law. No one ever pretended to dispute him, least of all his son. He did not intend to be domineering, but he could not brook opposition to his will or his plans, and few people, either within or without his home, had sufficient temerity to oppose him.

At four o'clock that afternoon Ben went to Captain McCormack's house on his unpleasant

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errand. But it was not Hal's mother who came to the door, nor yet Hal himself, nor a maid. It was Hal's aunt, Miss Sarah Halpert. She knew Ben, invited him in, and followed him into the little reception room.

"You can't see Hal," she said, "if that's what you came for. He isn't fit to be seen. And you can't see his mother for she'd be sure to make a mess of it. But you can see me and say anything you like. Now go ahead."

"Well," Ben replied, "there isn't much to say, except that I'm sorry about Hal. I didn't intend to hurt him; not that much anyway. And if there's anything I can do to help out, why, I'd like to."

"Who told you to say that?" she inquired abruptly.

"My father. He said I'd better call and express my regrets and offer my services."

"I thought as much. You wouldn't have come on your own motion, would you? Or would you?"

"Why, I don't know; maybe not. But I'm sure it's the right thing to do."

"Of course it is; and you deserve credit for doing it whether you came on your own account or because your father told you to. Now tell me; what was the trouble between you and Hal? First let me say, though, that he isn't bad off at all. He's coming out of it all right; a little dazed and mumbly,

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yet, but he'll be all over it in a day or two. Now, what led up to that fight?"

"Why, he as much as called me a puppy, and I wouldn't stand for it, that's all."

Ben threw back his shoulders and put on that determined look characteristic of the Barriscales.

"Of course you wouldn't," was Miss Halpert's quick reply. "No self-respecting young man cares to be called a puppy. But how did he come to call you one?"

"You see it was this way, Miss Halpert. His crowd put a sign on our gate-post Hallowe'en, 'Puppies for sale.' And one of them wrote on it to buy me because I was the only puppy left. I asked Hal who wrote it and he wouldn't tell me. He said he was willing to stand for whatever any one of the bunch did."

"Well, he was a pretty good sport, wasn't he?"

"Yes; if you look at it that way."

"But that's the way to look at it, isn't it? And when he wouldn't tell you, you got mad and punched him, didn't you?"

"Not exactly, but I jumped for him."

"Took him off his guard, didn't you?"

"I guess so."

"Was that fair? Was that sportsmanlike?"

"Perhaps not, if you put it that way."

"But that's the way to put it, isn't it?"

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"Well, if any one tries to put anything over on me I don't stop long to consider. I hit back."

"Exactly! Now, look here, Ben! I want to say something to you. You're a pretty good sort, and I rather like you. But you pattern too much after your father. He thinks he's right all the time, and that every one who doesn't agree with him is wrong. That's nonsense and I've told him so to his face. If you want to get on you'll have to drop that big I you carry around with you and concede something to the other fellow. He may be more than half right. For instance, when Hal pulls himself together, as he will in a day or two, you tell him, as you've admitted to me, that the stand he took in this matter wasn't very far from right, and that you were rather hasty in resenting it. He'll meet you more than half-way, I promise you. And you can tell him, too, that if he ever calls you a puppy when you don't deserve the name, you'll smash his face for him, and that I'll back you up in it. There, I guess that'll be all for to-day. Give my love to your mother, and tell her I'm going to call on her to-morrow."

"Thank you, Miss Halpert, I will."

As Ben left the house and walked down the street his mind was filled with conflicting emotions. He had been reprov'd, commended and admonished. And now, at the end of it all, he felt neither angry nor resentful. His self-respect was not diminished,



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but there seemed to have been added to his mental equipment a new sense of the responsibilities of manhood.

When Ben reported to his father that evening the result and the details of his visit to the McCormack home, the grim smile that occasionally illumined Mr. Barriscale's face spread perceptibly over it.

"And what uncomplimentary thing," he asked, "did Miss Halpert have to say about me this time?"

"Why, she said you thought you were always right and the other fellow wrong; that I patterned too much after you, and that if I wanted to get on with people I'd have to cut it out."

A slight flush overspread Mr. Barriscale's face, but he showed no resentment. On the contrary his smile deepened into a perceptible chuckle. Sarah Halpert was the only person in the city, or in any other city for that matter, who dared to tell him unpleasant things about himself. And, strange as it may seem, he never resented her criticism nor opposed her will. Indeed, he seemed to appreciate her frankness and esteem her friendship.

"Well," he said, after a moment, "she told you to fix things up with young McCormack, did she?"

"Yes. And she told me that if he ever called me a puppy again I should smash his face, and she'd back me up in it."

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At this the elder Barriscale laughed outright. But Ben hastened to add:

"That is, if I didn't deserve to be called a puppy."

"A very wise condition. Miss Halpert usually sees both sides of every question. You take her advice and you won't go far wrong."

But it was a week before Ben had an opportunity to carry out Miss Halpert's suggestion concerning Hal. Not that the injured boy was laid up that long; but the shock had been considerable, and it was thought not advisable to put him at his regular tasks too quickly, let alone the extra task at the armory. On the following Monday morning, however, he reported to Mr. McCrae for work. When he arrived Ben had not yet reached the armory, but he came soon afterward.

"Now then," said the superintendent when he had the boys together, "if you two young fellows have any uncomplimentary things to say to one another, I want you to say 'em now, and get through with it while I'm here, and then forget it and be friends."

"I've nothing much to say," replied Ben, "except that I've been thinking it over, and I guess Hal was more than half right about not giving away the fellow that wrote on the sign. I'll admit I was a little hasty in pitching into him, but I was pretty mad about that sign and my anger got the

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best of me. I'm sorry I hurt him as much as I did, though. I didn't intend to hurt him that much."

"Now, Halpert," said the superintendent, jocosely, "it's your play. Ben here has toed the mark pretty squarely in my opinion. The rest is up to you."

"Why, I've got nothing against him now," replied Hal. "I don't lay things up anyway. I agree with him that he was too hasty about pitching into me for not giving away the name of the other fellow; but I don't blame him one bit for getting mad about the sign. Anybody would have got mad about that, and had a right to. I would have got mad myself. So far as hurting me is concerned, I'm all right now, and I'm ready to forget it, as Mr. McCrae says."

"Good!" was the comment of the superintendent. "That's fine! That settles it. We'll dispense with the hand-shaking. It's seven o'clock and I want you boys to get busy. Ben, you show your pal where that other rake is, and both of you go to it."

The task to which the two boys were assigned, and in which Ben had already been engaged for a day or two, was the grading of the lawn at the side of the armory. It was desirable that the grading should be completed and the seeding done before freezing weather should set in, in order that a green sward might show in the early spring. Stakes had

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been set and lines stretched, low places had been filled in, and it now remained only to shape the surface with the rake. It was not a hard task nor a menial one; it required some skill, and an eye for long and graceful curves, and the work was not without its satisfactions and its compensations.

While the reconciliation between the two boys was apparently complete, it did not lead to comradeship. They differed from each other too radically in temperament, and in all the fundamental things on which personal characteristics are based, to make close companionship between them a possibility. But, during the period of their common labor, harmony and friendship were not lacking.

It was three weeks later that the new armory was dedicated. Great preparations had been made for the event. The Governor of the State, the Adjutant-General, and the Major-General in command of the state militia, were all to be there. So also were the colonel of the regiment and his staff, and prominent guests from other cities. There was to be a big meeting at the armory in the afternoon, and a grand military ball in the evening. Captain McCormack was to be in charge of all the exercises, and Mr. Barriscale, as president of the local Armory Board, was to make a brief address at the afternoon meeting. The programme was carried out to the letter. Hal and Ben were not without their parts in the performance. Their familiarity with the

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armory, its nooks, corners, accessories and occupants, obtained through three weeks of employment there, made their services as errand boys and helpers especially acceptable. And the excitement and novelty of the occasion provided them with much entertainment.

When Benjamin Barriscale arose to make his address to an audience that packed the great drill-hall, he felt, as he did not often feel, that the occasion was worthy of the speaker. His efforts as chairman of the local Armory Board had been crowned with success. The concrete result of his energetic leadership and liberal personal gifts was before the eyes of his townsmen. It had been too often the case that people looked somewhat askance at his prominence in civic affairs, searching for the personal advantage that might lie back of it. But, in this instance, surely no one could impute to him other than the most unselfish and disinterested motives. He did not minimize his own public-spirit and liberality in his speech, though he gave due credit to his fellow-workers in the enterprise. And he congratulated the State and the State Armory Board on their foresight and vision in providing so handsome, spacious and complete a building to crown the site purchased and paid for by the citizens of Fairweather of whom he was proud to be one.

“These patriotic and progressive young men of

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the National Guard," he said, "deserve the best quarters that can be provided for them. With but little compensation save a sense of duty performed, they stand ready at any moment not only to defend the commonwealth and the country, but also to protect those property rights and that invested capital without which no community can prosper. In order to make the military arm of the State most effective, the ranks of the militia should be recruited from young men of good education, of good family, ready at all times to meet and quell that spirit of unrest which seeks to overthrow the present system of organized society. I intend that when my son arrives at an appropriate age he shall become a member of this company, ambitious to attain to leadership in it, and I hope that other young men of like social standing will be filled with similar aspirations."

When Mr. Barriscale bowed and resumed his seat on the platform, the applause that greeted him was scant and perfunctory. Somehow he seemed to have struck a wrong note. The audience did not appear to be enthusiastic either over his conception of the qualifications for membership in the Guard, or of the duty of the militia toward the public. Nor did his declaration that his own son should eventually be a Guardsman meet with the outburst of approval that he had expected.

But there was little time for digesting his re-

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marks. Captain McCormack, troubled and apprehensive over the turn affairs had taken, made haste to introduce as the next speaker the Governor of the commonwealth.

"I heartily agree," began the Governor, "with the distinguished gentleman who preceded me, in most of what he has said. But it seemed to me that in one or two things he struck a discordant note. For instance, in my view of it, the National Guard was not created and does not exist for the purpose of protecting the property of the corporation and the millionaire any more than it does for protecting the humblest home in the commonwealth. Whenever and wherever the enemies of the state, foreign or domestic, seek by violence to subvert its laws and destroy the rights of its citizens, then and there the strong arm of the Guard will be lifted to restore order and preserve peace."

A hearty round of applause greeted the Governor's statement. It was evident that his audience agreed with him. He continued:

"Nor, in my opinion, should wealth, blue blood or social standing be requisites for admission to the ranks of the Guardsmen. The young men who belong to that organization should be democratic in principle, patriotic in spirit, physically and mentally capable of performing the duties required of them. Beyond that there should be no discrimination. It will be a sad day for this great State

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when any social class, no matter what, shall be in control either of its civil or its military affairs."

It was then that the Governor received his ovation. A tremendous and spontaneous outburst of applause followed swiftly on his last words. There was no mistaking the temper of the people who had listened to him. He had said the opportune thing at the psychological moment. Henceforth his place in the hearts of the citizens of Fairweather was secure. But he did not stop there. He was too politic for that. He went on to temper his rebuke by genuine commendation. The president of the Barriscale company was lauded for his public spirit, his liberality toward all good causes, and especially for his persistent and successful effort to provide a fitting home in Fairweather for the boys of the National Guard. Nor was the commendation confined to Mr. Barriscale. The speaker gave high praise to other citizens who had generously assisted in the enterprise, and to the public spirit which had led people of all classes, rich and poor, old and young, to do what lay in their power, often at great personal sacrifice, to bring to so happy a conclusion an adventure which would stand always to the credit of the city.

"For instance," he said, "as I approached this building this afternoon, I was struck by the perfect and artistic manner in which your armory lawn has been graded. And I was told that it was largely,



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the work of two boys in their teens, sons of prominent citizens, who generously and patriotically are giving their time and labor out of school hours, that the environment of this building may be the handsomest in the state."

"Huh!"

The exclamation came from Slicker who had been standing near the side of the platform gazing at the speaker with wide and admiring eyes, drinking in the power of his oratory. But the reference to the generosity and patriotism of Slicker's two Hallowe'en co-conspirators had been too much for his sense of humor; hence his inadvertent exclamation of joyous disbelief. He at once clapped both hands over his mouth to repress any further ejaculations of surprise or amusement, but it was too late. Most of the persons in the audience knew the story of the grading, realized the governor's mistake, and, after the first gasp at Slicker's interruption, burst into hearty laughter. The chief executive officer of the great commonwealth was plainly nonplused. He saw that he had fallen into some inadvertence, but what it was he could not imagine. He turned to Captain McCormack who was sitting at his right and inquired as to the cause of the general hilarity. But, when the captain rose to explain, he was so obviously confused and embarrassed that the audience broke into renewed fits of laughter, and the otherwise brave captain resumed his seat without

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having been able to vouchsafe a sufficient explanation of the situation to the distinguished guest. The Governor turned to Mr. Barriscale who was sitting at his left and repeated the question. The iron-master half rose from his chair to reply, but, looking out over the audience and noting the sight and sound of its ever increasing hilarity, he too sank back into his seat silent, bewildered and dumb.

"Perhaps," said the Governor, "if the two young gentlemen themselves are in the audience they will come forward and enlighten us." But the "two young gentlemen," who had hitherto been standing prominently near the steps leading to the platform, scenting trouble from the moment of Slicker's outburst, had, by this time, silently and judiciously disappeared.

It was at this juncture that Sarah Halpert, who had been sitting well to the front of the auditorium, rose in her place. Immediately the noise and laughter were hushed. If Sarah Halpert were about to say something the audience wanted to hear it; and the audience did hear it.

"Your Excellency," she said, addressing the Governor, "has obviously been misinformed concerning the motives which led to the employment of certain young men as laborers on the armory lawn. And since their fathers appear to be unable to explain the situation, and since the young men have vanished and cannot speak for themselves, I

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rise to speak for them. I will say plainly that the motives which led them to undertake their task were neither philanthropic, public-spirited nor patriotic. It was purely a case of involuntary servitude. Their labor was the penalty they were paying for having performed some mischievous Hallowe'en pranks contrary to the rules and customs of good society. They confessed like men, were sentenced by competent authority, and have willingly, cheerfully and splendidly been working out their sentence on the armory lawn. But, although they are involuntary laborers, I wish to tell you, sir, and I know them both well, and realize what I am saying, that they are learning something of self-respect and discipline that a year in no other school could possibly give them. They are learning to admire our soldiers, and to honor our flag, and, my word for it, when they reach the proper age and become members of the National Guard, there will be no more public-spirited, unselfish and patriotic young men in the city of Fairweather than Hal McCormack and Ben Barriscale."

Sarah Halpert took her seat. Her two-minute speech had cleared the atmosphere and had delighted the big audience. The applause that greeted her ears was ringing and prolonged. When the Governor was again able to gain the attention of the people he said:

"I am deeply grateful to the lady who has so

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clearly and eloquently explained the situation. In the days of our Civil War the drafted men were the bravest of our soldiers. If another war should compel us to raise a great army to defend our rights, the American conscript will be the pride of our country. By the same token it is no disparagement to these two young men of Fairweather to say that they have been involuntarily drawn into the service of their country, since they have performed their duties skilfully, willingly and zealously, like the good citizens that they are."

After that there was no interruption. The programme was carried out to the letter. And when the exercises were concluded Sarah Halpert hunted up Hal and Ben and introduced them to the Governor.

"Here are the two conscripts," she said. "They have come to plead for executive clemency."

"I will pardon them," replied His Excellency, "on one condition; and that is that they shall become members of the National Guard when they reach the mature age of eighteen years."

"If you will parol them in my custody," responded Miss Halpert, "I will see that they meet the condition. Oh, as to Ben, his father'll push him in; but as to Hal, I'll attend to that matter myself."

"That's very kind of you," replied the Governor, "but I'll venture to say that neither one of these

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young men will need urging when the time comes."

"I'm sure I won't," declared Ben.

The Governor turned to Hal. "And how about you?" he asked.

"Well," replied the boy frankly, "I can't say that I'm just crazy about it. I'd be glad to be a soldier and fight for my country in time of war. But I wouldn't particularly care to go out on strike duty, the way my father did, and fight men who can't defend themselves."

The Governor looked serious. "I see!" he said, after a moment's pause. "You would prefer to choose your enemy. Most of us would. But we can't always do that. We've got to take them as they come. And a domestic foe may prove to be a greater menace to our rights and liberties than a foreign one. However, I shall expect, some day, to see you both in the uniform of a Guardsman."

If Benjamin Barriscale, Sr., resented the governor's criticism of his impolitic speech, he did not manifest his resentment. The fact that he invited the executive head of the state and members of his staff to dine at the Barriscale mansion before going to the grand ball in the evening, and that the invitation was accepted, was significant of the continuance of friendly if not cordial relations between them. Neither one of them could afford, unneces-

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sarily, to antagonize the other, and both of them knew it.

It was not until the first snow of the winter lay an inch deep on the armory roof that Ben and Hal completed the tasks the compensation for which paid the damages assessed by Mr. Barriscale for the destruction of his statue.

On a Saturday morning early in December the two boys called at the office of the manufacturing company to close accounts. The ironmaster dictated a form of receipt to be given to each of them, and, when the papers were duly signed, he delivered them with much formality. Then he turned to Hal.

"What do you propose to make of yourself?" he inquired bluntly.

"I—I don't know just what you mean," stammered the boy.

"I mean what are you going to do for a living when you finish school? Ben here is going into this business with me. I shall begin training him this vacation. I intend that eventually he shall succeed me in the management if he shows aptness and industry. What are your plans?"

"Why," replied the boy, "father and I have rather figured it out that when I get through high school I am to prepare for college if he can afford to send me. And when I get through college maybe I'll study to be a lawyer or a doctor or a preacher. I don't know yet."

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"Well, it's high time you did know. A boy of your age should have his eye fixed on a certain goal, and then bend all his energy and effort to reach it."

"But," added Hal, "I know what I'd like to be. I'd like to be one of those settlement workers, like my cousin Jim is, or something like that, and help poor people to get their rights, and down-and-outers to have their chance to get up again."

"Nonsense!" Mr. Barriscale gave a grunt of displeasure. "If people are poor, in nine cases out of ten it's their own fault. It's because they're lazy and improvident. If they're down and out it's the result of indolence or dissipation. The only way to help them is to give them hard and steady work, as we do here. This settlement business and uplift business and all such schemes are more or less of a fad and a farce. Work and discipline are the only remedies for deplorable social conditions. What does your aunt, Miss Halpert, think you ought to do?"

"Well, she thinks I ought to do something to develop grit and backbone and muscle and things like that."

"Exactly! Miss Halpert is a woman of good judgment. We don't agree on some things; but she isn't lacking in common sense, and she isn't afraid to express her opinion."

Mr. Barriscale smiled grimly as he recalled some

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vigorous clashes with that public-spirited and determined woman. He rather liked an opponent who fought him openly and fairly and straight from the shoulder.

"Well," he added, "that's all for to-day. Ben, you remain here. I have some work for you to do."

As Hal went out into the street and swung along toward home he wondered if Mr. Barriscale's view of life was preferable to his own. And he thought that some day, when he was older, he would like to argue it out with him. But he never did.

His association with Ben at the armory when they were engaged in a common task could not help but result in a certain kind of friendship. But it did not develop at any time into comradeship, nor even into close companionship. Through the years that slipped by, they were friends and fellow-students, nothing more.



## CHAPTER IV.

**I**T was the Fourth of July in the year 1918. In accordance with the law of precedent and of patriotism every town and city in the United States should have had a public celebration of the day. But Fairweather was to have none. With the exception of a flag-raising on the plaza in front of the Barriscale mills the national anniversary was to go entirely unrecognized in the town so far as any public demonstration was concerned. But the flag-raising in itself was to be no inconsiderable event. Through the liberality of certain public-spirited citizens, principally gentlemen belonging to the Barriscale Manufacturing Company, a tall and beautifully tapering staff had been erected, capped with a gilded ball, and a handsome American flag had been procured and was ready to be drawn aloft.

It was a rare July day. The air was fresh and clear, the sky was cloudless, the heat was not oppressive.

The exercises were to take place at three o'clock, and it now wanted twenty minutes of that hour, but people were already beginning to come. They were strolling lazily down the four streets that led into the plaza, standing expectantly at the corners, hug-

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ging the shade of the big mill building on the west.

On the southerly curb, talking with each other, stood Halpert McCormack and Ben Barriscale. They had both reached the age of eighteen years. The one straight, slender and fair-haired, was telling the other that he had obtained employment in the Citizens' Bank and was to begin work there the following day. The career thus to be begun was not the one that had been planned for him. He was to have gone to college and then into one of the learned professions. But the death of his father soon after his own graduation from a preparatory school made it necessary to change the plans for his future, and he was to go into business instead.

"It's too bad," said Ben, "that you had to cut out your college course. You should have been a professor of something or other, you're so chock full of wisdom. What was it the boys used to call you? Socrates?"

"I believe so."

"And you were going to set the world right; weren't you?"

"Well, I thought there were some things in the world that needed to be set right; I still think so."

"For instance?"

"For instance, the unequal distribution of wealth."

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"Oh, every one can't be rich. Who'd do the world's work?"

"No, every one can't be rich, that's true. But if things were properly adjusted every one would have plenty, and there would be no poverty."

"That's some of your socialistic nonsense, Hal. I've got a right to be rich if I can get the money honestly. And I'm going to be rich, too, if hard work will get me there."

"Ah, but you're Benjamin Barriscale's son. And your father is a millionaire. And you've got a chance that no other fellow in this town has. That's what I'm finding fault with. Opportunity should be equal for all of us. And when things are set right it will be."

How much longer this sociological discussion would have continued had it not been interrupted is uncertain. But it was interrupted. An automobile drew up to the curb, and in it was seated Miss Sarah Halpert, alone save for the driver of the car. Her appearance and manner indicated that she was a woman of some importance in the community. She was appropriately gowned, attractive in looks, and under the brim of her flower-bedecked hat her abundant hair showed becomingly gray. The fair-haired boy greeted her cordially as Aunt Sarah, the dark and stocky one with due courtesy, as Miss Halpert.

"I suppose you boys are here to see the flag-

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raising," she said. "I'm sorry I can't stay for it. I like the idea tremendously." She turned to face the dark-haired boy and continued: "I'm not a great admirer of your father, Ben, everybody knows that. But I certainly commend him for heading the movement to put this flag here. Parades and speeches are all right enough in their way; but when it comes to inspiring genuine patriotism, give me the sight of 'Old Glory' waving in the breeze every time."

"Yes," answered Ben, "there are so many persons of foreign birth working in the mills that father thought the sight of the flag every day would be a constant reminder to them of the duty they owe this government, and the necessity they are under of obeying its laws."

"Good idea!" exclaimed the lady. "Don't you think so, Hal?" turning to the fair-haired boy.

"I suppose so," replied Hal, "provided the government is so conducted as to command their obedience and respect."

"Well, isn't it?" she asked sharply.

"Oh, I think there are some things that might be changed for the better."

"What are they, I'd like to know? No, you needn't tell me. It's just some of your high-brow notions about the social order and that sort of thing, and I don't want to hear them. What business has a boy of your age, anyway, befogging his brains

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over economic problems? Studying baseball scores is a vastly better business for young fellows like you."

The music of an approaching band had grown more distinct, and a procession could be seen coming down the main street toward the plaza. The procession consisted of town officials, speakers of the day, committeemen, prominent citizens, a group of young girls dressed in white, and the local company of state militia. Miss Sarah Halpert stood up in her automobile to watch the soldiers as they marched by. Dressed in khaki, arms at a right-shoulder, straight and sturdy, obeying commands with the precision of veterans, they certainly formed a pleasing and inspiring sight. The woman clapped her hands vigorously in approval, her eyes sparkled, and a flush came into her cheeks.

"Splendid!" she cried. "There's young manhood for you!" She turned toward the fair-haired youth.

"Halpert McCormack," she exclaimed, "you ought to be in that company this minute. A boy whose father was captain of it for ten years has no right to be outside of it."

"I've been thinking about joining," responded Hal. "I'm eighteen now, and I suppose I could get in. I think father would have liked me to be a member."

"Of course he would. You must apply for ad-

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mission to the company at once. What about you, Ben?" turning to the other boy.

"Oh, my application's already in," replied Ben. "I believe in the military life. It's splendid discipline for any fellow. Besides, when my country needs soldiers I want to be prepared to fight."

"Good! That's the talk!" She clapped her hands again. "Now go to it, Hal. See who gets a commission first, you or Ben. I'll tell you what I want," she continued; "I want to see Halpert McCormack captain of Company E, as his father was before him, and Benjamin Barriscale its first lieutenant."

"Suppose the order of rank should be reversed?" inquired Hal, laughingly.

"It wouldn't hurt my feelings a great lot," she retorted. "It's only because 'blood is thicker than water,' and because you're my only sister's son, that I want you to be the ranking officer; but if you don't deserve the honor I hope to goodness you won't get it!" She consulted her watch and continued: "Well, I must be off. I'll leave you boys to see that that flag is properly raised. Good-bye, both of you!"

She gave hurried directions to her driver, the car moved forward, and, with a final wave of her hand, she disappeared up the street down which she had so recently come.

The procession had passed by, the soldiers were

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standing at the foot of the staff at "parade rest," and the band had already begun to play the opening number of the programme when the two boys, pushing their way through the crowd, reached more nearly the center of activity. Following the music there came an invocation by a local clergyman and a brief address by the mayor. Then the young girls, dressed in white, charged with the duty of actually raising the flag, came forward to perform their patriotic task. Assisted by the chairman of the flag committee, they fastened the colors securely to the halyards and awaited the order to begin hoisting. The company bugler sounded to the color, and the band struck into the first chord of The Star-Spangled Banner. Some one shouted: "Hats off!" and immediately the hat or cap of every man and boy in the assemblage came from his head, the hat or cap of every man and boy save one. Immediately back of Ben and Hal stood a black-haired, dark-eyed young man, apparently of foreign birth or descent. His hat did not come off. He was fairly well dressed, he bore marks of intelligence if not of culture, and there appeared to be no reason why he should not join the rest of the company in doing honor to the national anthem and the national flag. Moreover, from his easy manner and confident look, it soon became apparent that he acted, or failed to act, not from ignorance or inadvertence, but from deliberate choice.

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"Take off your hat!" said a man standing beside him.

"Why should I take off my hat?" he replied.

"Because they're playing 'The Star-Spangled Banner' and they're raising the flag, you fool!"

The young man with the covered head did not appear to resent the uncomplimentary remark, but he made no move which might have been interpreted as an intention to obey the order that had been given to him. The two boys had already turned to face the speakers. People in the vicinity who, by reason of the band's music, had failed to hear what had been said, yet knowing that a quarrel was beginning, began to move toward the immediate scene of the controversy. The defiant young man regarded them with cool indifference.

"The flag which they raise," he said, "stands too much for the injustice and the wrong, that I should honor it."

The man who had protested grew red in the face.

"Why, you ingrate," he shouted, "the protection you get from that flag was what brought you to this free country, and you know it!"

And the defiant one answered:

"The only flag which gives the protection to all men alike is the red flag of the common brotherhood. I honor no capitalist banner."

He spoke distinctly, decisively, with an accent that marked him as a student if not a master of



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English. Still his hat remained on his head. More people, attracted by the speakers, began to crowd closer, eager to hear, at short range, what was an interesting if not a heated controversy.

In the meantime, at the foot of the flagstaff, there was confusion and delay. The band was still playing, but the colors were not moving upward. Something had gone wrong with the apparatus by which the flag was to be hoisted. A portion of the blue field and some of the milk-white stars had been drawn up above the heads of the audience, but had refused to go higher. Apparently the halyards had caught in the pulley at the top of the staff, and all the efforts of the young girls robed in white, and all the efforts of the chairman of the flag committee, mingled freely with perspiration and ejaculations, failed to release them. But, even in the face of this attractively awkward situation, people were turning and pressing in ever increasing numbers toward the man who had refused to uncover his head either at the sound of the music or the sight of the folds of The Star-Spangled Banner. :

An impetuous young fellow, pushing his way in from the outskirts of the crowd, cried:

“Oh, don’t fool with him! If he won’t take his hat off, knock it off!”

The suggestion was no sooner made than it was acted upon. A near-by hand shot out, and the next moment the offensive head-gear went flying out into

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the crowd. The face of the defiant one flushed and paled, his dark eyes blazed with indignation, his lips twitched; but he did not speak. No one appeared to sympathize with him; no one put forth any effort to protect him. On the contrary, all those who witnessed the overt act made noisy manifestation of their approval; all but Halpert McCormack. He was silent and doubtful. He would have resented any imputation of disloyalty on his part either in thought or deed. But the thing that had just been done did not appeal to him. It offended his sense of justice. His sympathy, which had always been for the under dog in any fight, was aroused in behalf of the man who was standing alone in the midst of a hostile crowd. But he said nothing; it would have been useless to protest. Nor was he quite sure that the man had not, partly at least, deserved the treatment he had received. Doubtless the incident would have been closed then and there had not the red-faced man who had originally protested desired further to express his abhorrence of acts savoring of disloyalty to the flag.

"You've no kick coming," he said, addressing the young man whose hat had been forcibly removed and was now irretrievably crushed; "you're lucky not to have your face smashed as well as your hat."

"Well," was the prompt reply, "if this is what you call it the American spirit of fair play, then I

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have the good reason to dishonor your American flag."

And the red-faced man, growing still more angry, retorted:

"If you don't like the American spirit, go back where you came from. What business have you got here, anyway? Who are you?"

Again the reply came promptly and deliberately:

"I have the same business here like you. Me, I am Hugo Donatello, Internationalist. My journal, which I publish in your city, is by name *The Disinherited*. I commend it to your reading that you may learn from it the first principles of human justice and decency."

Then the fellow at whose suggestion Donatello was made hatless broke in again:

"Oh, I know who he is. He's an anarchist. He's no business here. Run him out!"

Half a dozen voices echoed the cry: "Run him out! Run him out!"

In the crowd there was a movement, perceptible and ominous, an involuntary drawing toward the center of the disturbance. The red-faced man spoke up again:

"Gentlemen, this fellow is not only an enemy to our government, he has also insulted our flag. Before he is permitted to go he should be made to *size*."

idea became suddenly popular.

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"Yes," was the cry from a dozen throats, "make him apologize!"

The red-faced man turned toward the intended victim. "Well," he demanded, "are you going to do it?"

"Do what?"

"Apologize."

"To whom?"

"To the flag."

"But I do not honor your flag. It is the same as nothing to me."

"We'll make you honor it. By the shade of Washington, we'll make you kiss it!"

"Ah, that is the autocratic boast! But I am of the people. I defy you! I will spit upon your flag!"

He stood, with bloodless face and blazing eyes, desperate and defiant. He could no longer hold his anger in check. He had spoken his mind. And he knew, or should have known, that he must now pay the penalty for his rashness. It was Ben Barriscale who, echoing the red-faced man's suggestion, shouted:

"Make him kiss the flag!"

It was a suggestion and a demand that was caught up at once by the crowd, and immediately there was a concerted movement to carry it out. A powerful man, standing near Donatello, seized his arms and pinioned them behind his back. A dozen

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hands reached out to force him toward the spot where the colors still lay in the arms of the girls dressed in white.

Up to this moment Halpert McCormack had looked on disapprovingly, but had held his peace. He could remain silent no longer. His sense of fair play had been outraged. To hound this man into expressions of disloyalty and contempt and then to make him pay the humiliating penalty strained his patience to the breaking point.

"It's not fair!" he shouted. "You drove him into it. You've got no right to punish him!" He started forward, with arms raised as if to strike off the hands that were gripping and pushing the defamer of the flag. But men who were not able to reach Donatello could reach his would-be defender, and they did. They held him back and pulled down his arms, and the red-faced man shouted at him:

"You hold your tongue, young fellow, or you'll get a dose of the same medicine."

But the victim of over-zealous patriotism shot a grateful glance at the boy.

"You have the red blood," he cried; "I salute you!"

Then, hatless, white-faced, outraged in soul and body, Donatello was propelled, not too gently, to the foot of the flagstaff.

The young girls in white became so frightened at the spectacle that they forgot all rules of flag



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etiquette and dropped the colors to the ground and fled. And into the mass of red, white and blue bunting, caught up by some rescuer, the face of the man who had expressed a desire to spit upon the flag was rudely and violently thrust. He had been forced to his knees, his coat was half torn from his shoulders, and his mass of black hair was flung in disorder across his eyes.

After his commendation of McCormack's futile effort to protect him he did not again speak. He knew that words would have been not only useless but provocative no doubt of still greater violence. And when the crowd, burning with patriotic zeal, had worked its will with him, had made him, after its fashion, "kiss the flag," they let him go. They not only let him go, they helped him on his way. They escorted him to the curb at the opening of the main street into the plaza, turned his face to the north, and, with one final thrust, sent him reeling up the walk. Having performed this patriotic task they returned to the foot of the flagstaff where renewed efforts on the part of the chairman of the committee had finally resulted in the freeing of the halyards, and "Old Glory," hoisted by the girls in white, at last flung its emblematic folds out on the sustaining winds, and flashed its splendid colors in the sunlight of a perfect summer day.

But one young American, Halpert McCormack by name, unconscious of any feeling of disloyalty



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to his country's flag, believing nevertheless that it had been made the occasion and the cause of unnecessary and disgraceful persecution, turned away in disgust from the crowd that had been so rudely patriotic, and walked thoughtfully and regretfully toward his home.

And one young radical of foreign birth and destructive purpose, son of Italian parents, outraged beyond expression at his treatment by a patriotic mob, sought his modest quarters to brood over his wrongs, and to lay plans and conceive plots that should in time satisfy his passionate desire for revenge.

## CHAPTER V.

**A**LTHOUGH the incident at the flag-raising on the Fourth of July was deeply and unpleasantly impressed on the mind and memory of Halpert McCormack, it did not deter him from following the advice of his Aunt Sarah Halpert, and filing his application to become a member of Company E of the National Guard. He felt, in the first place, that in doing so he was honoring the memory of his father, who had been, in his lifetime, the captain of the company and devoted to its interests. He felt also that while military force ought to be unnecessary in the conduct and protection of governments, the times were not yet ripe for the voluntary disarmament of any nation, and that perhaps it was his duty as a young American citizen to identify himself with the visible means of preserving domestic order and preventing foreign aggression. His application for enlistment was promptly approved by the commanding officer, and he was directed to present himself at the armory to be sworn in.

It so happened that McCormack and Benjamin Barriscale, Jr., appeared at headquarters on the same evening for the same purpose. The oath, ad-



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ministered to them by Captain Murray, was handed to them on separate sheets for each one to sign. Young Barriscale affixed his name at once with a dash and a certainty that indicated complete satisfaction with the course he was taking. But McCormack was not so prompt. He was given to deliberation, and he read over carefully the oath that he had already heard. It was only after he had fully digested its contents and asked some questions concerning it that he signed his name. One clause of it stuck fast in his memory, and he never afterward forgot it.

“And I do solemnly swear that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America, that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies whomsoever.”

After the ceremony of enlistment had been completed Barriscale and McCormack were placed in charge of a sergeant and taken down to the drill-hall to be instructed in the “setting-up” process. And, as no other recruits had been enlisted at about that time, they two alone formed the awkward squad.

They were made to assume the position and attitude of a soldier: Heels on the same line, feet turned out equally, knees straight without stiffness, body and head erect and squarely to the front, chin drawn in, arms hanging naturally with thumbs

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along the seams of the trousers. They were drilled in alignments, in the facings and in marchings. Occasionally an officer or a group of privates would come along and watch for a little the instruction of the "rookies," and comment on the facility with which they grasped an understanding of military methods and practice. But there was no criticism of their awkwardness, nor was any fun made of their mistakes.

The most interested onlooker was Chick Dallo-way. Chick was a hanger-on of Company E. He had a decided leaning toward the military life, and hoped some day to be a member of the company. But poor Chick was under-sized, hump-backed, lop-shouldered, and hollow-chested. Moreover he had not that degree of mental alertness and stability necessary in an efficient soldier. So, although no one had ever had the heart, or heartlessness, to tell him so, every one but Chick knew that there was no possibility of his ever becoming an enlisted man in Company E. In the meantime, however, the company profited by his devotion to its interests. He was always present on drill nights, he always accompanied the troops to the summer encampment, he ran errands, he carried water, he cleaned equipment, he performed all kinds of humble service for the officers and enlisted men; and while he was not on the company's pay-roll, he received regularly a small gratuity from those whom he served. And as

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the weeks and months and years went by, he never ceased to dream of the day when he too should wear khaki, and carry a rifle, and march with the best of them.

At the end of an hour the two new recruits were dismissed with commendation from the drill-master and compliments from Chick.

"I ain't never seen no two rookies," said the boy, "since I been in the company, what got into the game quicker'n easier'n them fellers."

It was three weeks later that McCormack, on his way to the armory on a drill night, ran squarely into Hugo Donatello at the river bridge on Main Street. It was the first time that the two young men had seen each other since the Fourth of July, but the recognition was mutual. McCormack would have passed on with a nod, but Donatello stopped and held out his hand.

"I have not before had the opportunity," he said, "to thank you for your attitude toward me on your Independence Day. I wish that I do so now."

Hal took the man's hand; he could do no less.

"Oh," he replied, "that was nothing. I thought they weren't giving you a square deal, and I said so, that was all."

"I know; but it demanded the courage to say so. You were very brave. Me, I shall not soon forget it."

"Well," replied Hal, smiling, "I always did

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sympathize with the under dog in a fight, and you were the under dog that day all right."

"Yes. The—the under dog." He was a little doubtful about the meaning of the phrase. The simile was not familiar to him. But he continued: "They thought to punish me. It is the—what you call—boomerang. The incident is known and deprecated by workers everywhere. It has roused their resentment. They do not like that a capitalist flag be made one excuse for abuse and oppression of a member of the proletariat. The ruling class, they are to suffer for that outrage."

His voice rose at the finish, and his eyes flashed. It was plain that the resentment he harbored was deep and bitter.

"I've told you already," said Hal, "that I didn't think they treated you right. But I don't know that it was the ruling class that was to blame for it."

"Yes. The capitalistic system. That is it which is to blame for all outrages on society. When the workers come into control, it is then that there will be justice for everybody."

He opened his arms as if to take into his embrace all men everywhere.

"I know," replied Hal. "I know what you people preach; I know what your paper advocates. I read it. I'm interested in this social problem. I think you're right in a good many things, but I can't follow you to the end. I'm with everybody who

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doesn't have a fair chance. But I don't see the justice in knocking down a man who has a little more than I have and taking it away from him, provided he got it honestly."

"Exactly! If he got it honestly then would he have no more than his fellow-man. Exactly! It is the ruling class who take the workers by the throat and choke them, so, into submission, into labor, poverty, bondage. What is the law? They make the law for us to obey. Do we ask for our own? Behold the jail! Do we try to take what belongs to us? Come the hired assassins, police, constabulary, militia, federal troops. So! It is terrible! Yet, some day, some day the workers will come into their own!"

They had stopped on the bridge and stood leaning against the guard-rail, looking out through the twilight across the shadowed surface of the river to the hills that towered precipitately from the farther bank. As they stood there Ben Barriscale passed them by on his way to the armory. Attracted by the eagerness in Donatello's voice, he slackened his pace for a moment to look and listen. But the speakers, absorbed in their conversation, did not notice him.

"Why," replied Hal, "I know there's a good deal of injustice. But without the courts and the military there'd be more. We've got to have a government, and laws, and we've got to keep order.

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That's what the militia is for. I belong to the National Guard, now, myself."

"So? You are, then, a soldier?"

"Yes. I've got a state and a country. I've sworn allegiance to the United States, and to the State of Pennsylvania, and that I will serve them against all their enemies."

"So, then, who are their enemies?" asked Donatello, and answered his own question: "all who exploit labor and oppress the poor."

"Yes," agreed Hal, "that's true, perhaps. But there may be more direct enemies. Mobs at home, governments abroad that would want to fight us. We must protect our own. We must be patriotic."

Donatello caught up the word:

"Patriotic! What then is patriotism? A fetish! Nothing more. A superstition fostered by capitalism for its own most selfish purposes. Oh, in that day, under the rule of the proletariat, patriotism will not be any more. Workers the world over will unite under one flag, the red flag of the common brotherhood. Not any longer will be nationalism, but internationalism. Not any longer will be wars, poverty, suffering; but peace, always peace, plenty, happiness!"

The arc light on the bridge flashed up and lighted the speaker's face, aglow with earnestness and conviction. That he was a devout believer in his own propaganda there could be no doubt.

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Hal lifted his elbows from the railing and shook his shoulders as if to cast off the spell laid on him by the speaker's enthusiasm.

"Well," he said, "I've got to hurry along or I'll be late for drill. I'm glad to have had a talk with you, though; I've often wanted to hear one of you radicals expound your beliefs. I've thought and read about these things quite a bit. I like your idealism all right; but I can't follow you practically."

"Ah, but some day you will, when you see the more clearly. I shall talk with you again; is it not so? I have much interest. We may reach common ground."

He held out his hand cordially, as to an old-time friend. So they shook hands and said good-night to each other, and then Private McCormack, with a leaning toward socialism, hurried along to the armory to attend to his duties as a soldier in the service of the State.

Both McCormack and Barriscale were now serving regularly in the ranks. They were fully uniformed and equipped, and they drilled, marched, and faced imaginary foes with the rest. It was not a disagreeable service. The officers of the company were considerate, and the enlisted men were for the most part congenial, at least to Hal. Moreover, there was a kind of satisfaction, an exhilaration indeed, in the performance of military movements in

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unison with a body of men. The swing and rhythm of it were captivating to Hal, the sense of power engendered by it was inspiring to Ben. And then, too, a feeling of patriotism was aroused, an emotion that would not have been so deeply stirred by the activities of civil life. But, while McCormack was patriotic, he was not bloodthirsty. On the contrary, he was peace-loving in the extreme. No one would have deprecated more than he the necessity of going to war, yet if his country had been endangered, or his flag threatened, he would not have hesitated to fight. Young Barriscale, on the other hand, was more belligerent. He believed in the arbitrament of the sword. He believed that a nation like ours should always maintain a strong, well-drilled, well-officered national army, and be prepared to fight, not only for the suppression of domestic and internal revolts, not only for the defense of its own soil, but also for the preservation of the liberties of any people oppressed by a tyrannical government, as Cuba had been prior to 1898. Naturally, with such divergent opinions, there had been more than one clash between the two boys, yet no bad blood had been aroused, and their friendship with each other remained unbroken. There had been another point of disagreement between them also. That was concerning the punishment meted out to Donatello on the Fourth of July. Ben had insisted that it was not a fraction of what he de-



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served; Hal had contended that it was excessive, uncalled for, and brutal. So, while the two young men remained passive friends, there had been no companionship between them. Indeed, they had little in common save a desire on the part of each to excel in proficiency as a member of the National Guard.

Then came an incident, entirely unlooked for, that brought to a sudden end such friendly relations as had hitherto existed between them. It occurred on the same evening on which McCormack had had his interview with Donatello on the bridge. It was following company drill. Ranks had been broken, and the men moved off, singly and in groups, to the stack and locker room to put away their rifles and equipment, Hal and Ben going with the rest. But it so chanced that each of the two boys, independently of the other, decided to remain for a little and clean and brighten up his gun and accoutrements.

Ben had discovered a small spot of rust on the barrel of his rifle and he determined to remove it. So, after oiling and rubbing the leather parts of his equipment, he got a piece of emery paper from his locker and set to work.

The only persons remaining in the stack-room at this time, besides himself, were Hal, who was busy cleaning his own rifle, and Chick, who was watching them both.

Chick usually followed the enlisted men to the

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ter drill, and helped them, so far as they  
so be helped, in disposing of their arms and  
utrements.

He was looking on now at Hal, talking with him, making suggestions and comments, commending him for the excellence of his work. Of the two boys he liked Hal the better. For Hal was always kind to him, and very considerate, and treated him just as though he were already the bona fide enlisted man that he expected some day to be; while Ben, aside from directing him, on occasion, to perform some small service, was dignified and distant, and had little to say to him.

So to-night, save for an occasional side glance, Chick was paying little attention to Private Barriscale. But when, out of the corner of his eye, he saw Ben, with his rifle resting across his knees, begin to rub the spot of rust on the barrel with a square of emery paper, the boy's attention was instantly attracted, and his interest aroused. He looked on incredulously for a moment, then, apparently unable to restrain his criticism, he walked across the room to where Ben was sitting.

"Excuse me!" he said, saluting as he approached, "but that ain't no way to git rust spots off'n a rifle bar'l."

Private Barriscale looked up in amazement. He was not accustomed to being criticized by a company hanger-on, and, besides, things had not gone

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well at the drill, and he was not in a particularly genial mood.

"What? What's that you say?" he demanded sharply.

"I say," responded Chick, "as that ain't no way to clean a rifle bar'l. You shouldn't ever ought to clean a rifle bar'l with emery."

"What business is it of yours how I clean my rifle?"

"Why, I s'pose 't ain't none o' my business. But I know 't no one can't clean his rifle bar'l with no emery paper, cause it's ag'inst the rules."

"Well, when I want your advice I'll tell you. In the meantime suppose you confine your admonitions to your friend across the room."

Chick was not angry nor resentful. He felt that he had done his duty by a new recruit. If his advice was not acceptable it was not his fault.

"Excuse me!" he said. "I didn't have no intention o' buttin' in. I just wanted you to know what I know about cleanin' rifle bar'ls. I al'ays try to help the rookies out, best I kin."

Then, indeed, Ben's wrath blazed up. To be called a "rookie" by this inconsequential camp-trotter was more than he could stand. He jumped to his feet and brought the butt of his rifle to the floor with a crash.

"You leave this room!" he shouted. "You've no business here! You're a meddler and a fool!"

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Chick stood staring at the angry youth in amazement. He could not understand why his well-intentioned advice should have brought forth such a burst of wrath. Still less could he understand why he should be ordered to leave a room in which, so far as he knew, he had been welcome as a friend and helper for the last three years. Nor could Halpert McCormack understand it. Or, if he did dimly understand the cause of Barriscale's wrath he could have no sympathy with him in his angry outburst. Up to this moment he had been a silent witness to the affair. Now he felt that it was just to Chick, and due to his own self-respect, that he should take a hand in it.

"You don't have to go, Chick," he said quietly. "I've as much authority here as Barriscale has, and I tell you to stay."

Ben's face, already flushed with anger, turned scarlet now. For a moment he could not find words with which to express his indignation. But when he did speak it was apparent that the current of his wrath had changed and was setting violently toward Hal.

"What business is it of yours," he demanded, "what orders I give to this intermeddling runt?"

"It's my business," replied Hal, "because you've no right to give such orders. Besides, Chick wasn't intermeddling; he intended to do you a favor."

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"Me? Do me a favor?" He spoke in a voice and manner of infinite scorn.

"Yes. He was entirely right when he said it was improper and against the rules to use emery paper on your rifle barrel. A little oil, a piece of soft wood, and a woolen rag will remove a spot of rust effectually and save the finish on your barrel."

If Hal had thought to appease his comrade's wrath by this explanation, he soon discovered his error. Barriscale was more violently angry than before.

"Who set you up," he shouted, "as an instructor in the care of arms?"

McCormack was still calm.

"No one," he replied. "I've simply studied my regulations, and Chick taught me, a week ago, how to remove rust."

"Oh, Chick taught you, did he? Major-General Chick! No wonder you've made a bosom friend of him! It seems to be the height of your ambition to make boon companions of anarchists and fools!"

This was his parting shot. He put his rifle in its place in the rack with a bang, flung his cleaning appliances into his locker and snapped the door shut, and then, white with unreasonable rage, he left the room.

## CHAPTER VI

**I**T was late in the spring following the enlistment of Halpert McCormack and Ben Barriscale in Company E. Ben's father, for whom the boy had been named, was well satisfied with his son's predilection toward military service, and looked to see him make rapid promotions. Mr. Barriscale was still favorably disposed toward the National Guard. As president of the Barriscale Manufacturing Company he was a large employer of both skilled and unskilled labor. There had been times when differences of opinion between him and his employees had reached the verge of a strike, with possible violence and disorder looming up in the distance. Such times might occur in the future. No one could tell. If they should occur, and if there should be any serious outbreak, an outbreak beyond the power of the local police or the state constabulary to quell, then the safety of a half million dollars' worth of property might depend on the prompt and efficient action of the soldiers of the National Guard.

It had been demonstrated, time and again, that the military are always masters of the mob. This fact may have accounted to some extent for Mr.

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Barriscale's interest in the state militia. And his favorable attitude toward Company E was doubtless largely due to the further fact that his only son was now a promising member of that organization. Be that as it may, when he entered Captain Murray's office on an ideal June morning in 1914 it was with a most favorable predisposition toward the company of which the captain was the commander. It was also with a due sense of the importance of his errand. But Mr. Barriscale's errands were always important. As the head of the greatest industry in the city of Fairweather, he was, of necessity, one of the city's leading men, and he was not averse to being recognized as such.

It was his habit, in matters of business, to waste no time in preliminary or needless conversation. He was by nature as blunt and direct as Captain Murray was politic and suave. He might therefore have been expected to go at once to the purpose of his visit; but, for some unknown reason, he apparently desired, on this occasion, to approach it by degrees.

"I am, as you doubtless know," he said, "a firm believer in the National Guard. I consider it one of the most important arms of our state government."

The captain replied courteously: "I have understood that to be your attitude, Mr. Barriscale; and of course I fully agree with you."

"And possibly," continued the visitor, "you will

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recall the fact that I was one of the contributors, I may say the largest contributor, toward the fund raised by the citizens for the purchase of the ground on which the State erected your armory, and president of the local Armory Board."

"Yes; I remember that circumstance and your service with gratitude."

"And since my son has been a member of Company E, of course my interest in your organization has greatly increased."

"Quite naturally, and very properly."

The captain was now wondering what all this was leading up to, but his curiosity was not to be immediately satisfied. So far as prolixity was concerned, Mr. Barriscale was breaking the habit of a lifetime. He continued:

"I wish to say that I was particularly impressed with the fine appearance, the soldierly precision, and the correct military bearing of your men in the parade on last Memorial Day."

"Thank you! I appreciate the compliment. I believe the men deserve it."

"Yes. And I consider it our duty, sir, as civilians, to encourage our young soldiers to excel in military performance; in fact, sir, to make your company the crack company in the National Guard of our State."

"Thank you! That would be a most laudable ambition on the part of my men."



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"Therefore I have decided to establish a prize of one hundred dollars to be awarded each year to that enlisted man of your company who shall be most proficient in military drill, and most faithful in the performance of all of his military duties."

"Yes?" Now that the secret was out Captain Murray was not only taken by surprise, as Mr. Barriscale intended he should be, but he was not quite sure whether the surprise was an agreeable one. "Yes," he repeated. "A most generous proposition on your part. I shall be very glad to consider its practicability."

"Oh, I have considered all that," was the reassuring reply. "The plan is entirely feasible. I propose to place a fund of twenty-five hundred dollars in trust, the annual interest on which will pay the expense of administration and provide the stipulated amount for the prize. As to the manner of making the award I am not particular. I am entirely willing that the company commander shall designate the man."

"I would not think of taking such a responsibility on myself," replied the captain promptly. "A commanding officer should avoid everything which might possibly be construed as an act of favoritism."

"Yes, I had thought you might hesitate to make an award, and in that event I had decided to recommend that it be made by a committee of com-

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missioned officers chosen from the Guard outside of your company. That method should be entirely satisfactory to the competitors."

"No doubt it would be. But, of course, the first question to be decided is that of accepting your most generous offer."

Mr. Barriscale looked a trifle startled. "You do not mean to intimate," he said, "that there is any doubt in your mind about the advisability of accepting my gift?"

The captain replied diplomatically:

"Regardless of how eager I might be, personally, to take advantage of your offer, I consider the matter too important to be left to my unaided judgment. In the first place, your proposition should be presented to my military superiors for their approval, and, that obtained, my men should have a voice in the matter of its acceptance."

Mr. Barriscale was surprised but not disconcerted.

"Your men?" he said inquiringly. "I can understand why your superior officers should be consulted, but I presumed that it was for your men to obey orders and abide by rules."

"Well, you see it's this way, Mr. Barriscale. In a way military government is excessively autocratic, and in another way it is, or should be, highly democratic. It's the only way to preserve discipline, and at the same time to keep the men happy, con-

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tented and self-respecting. Now, in a case like this, which lies somewhat outside of military rules, precedents and discipline, I think it is extremely important that the men should have their say about it from the start. It makes a better feeling all the way around. Captain McCormack adopted that policy years ago, and I have tried to continue it. I think you see the point."

"Yes, I see. I suppose popular opinion must be catered to, even in military matters. Well, have it as you like. There is no doubt but that your men will eagerly embrace such an opportunity as I offer them, not only for the sake of the prize itself, but also for the sake of the incentive to excel that it will give to all of them."

"Yes." Captain Murray did not seem to be unduly enthusiastic, and Mr. Barriscale continued:

"I will have my lawyer put the offer in correct written form, setting forth the purpose and conditions of the foundation, so that you will have a concrete proposition to present to your superiors in office. I will burden the gift with but one unalterable condition, and that is that the prize shall be known as 'The Barriscale Prize for Military Excellence.'"

"A very proper and appropriate name for it, I am sure. I will take the matter up immediately upon receiving your written offer. In the mean-

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time permit me to express to you my deep personal gratitude for your interest in my men."

There were a few minutes more of courteous conversation, and then Mr. Barriscale hurried to the street, entered his car, and was driven to his office at the mills, leaving Captain Murray uncertain, perplexed, and apprehensive of trouble in the matter of the millionaire's proposed gift.

Nor was Mr. Barriscale entirely satisfied with the result of his interview. As he thought the matter over later, in his office, it occurred to him that his proposal should have been accepted at once by the company commander. To refer the offer to the enlisted men for their approval might imply that there was a question about the acceptability of his gift, and this was not a pleasing thought to him. It was inconceivable that a public donation from Benjamin Barriscale should be looked at askance by the donees. But the situation annoyed him to such an extent that he was on the point of calling up Captain Murray by telephone and withdrawing his offer, and doubtless he would have done so had he not been at that moment interrupted by a business call of importance. Later in the day, however, when his mind returned to the topic, his resolution had stiffened, and he decided to see the matter through, regardless of the manner of reception of his offer. He had made the proposition, he would stand by his guns. It was not long, therefore, be-

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fore he sent to Captain Murray the written plan for his proposed prize donation. The captain sent it up to regimental headquarters and asked for instructions. In due time he was advised that there was nothing in the regulations to prevent the acceptance of the gift, and that so long as it proceeded from an individual, and not from a firm or corporation employing workmen, there would appear to be nothing in military ethics adverse to the idea of acceptance. In short, it was a matter for the discretion of the company commander, or for the decision of his enlisted men if he chose to refer the question to them.

Captain Murray was in a quandary. He feared to throw the question of acceptance open to his men lest the proposed prize should become an apple of discord. He hesitated to decide the matter himself, lest he should be considered too autocratic. Moreover, while he felt that the company could not afford to reject a gift offered by a man of Mr. Barriscale's prominence and peculiarity, he well knew that the spirit in which the offer had been made was not an entirely disinterested one, and that if the gift were accepted the public would draw its own conclusions. Many times he heartily wished that the fertile brain of the millionaire manufacturer had never conceived the idea.

Not so Mr. Barriscale. Having recovered from the slight shock which Captain Murray's hesitancy,

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had given him, the more he thought about his proposition the more pleased he was with his altruistic plan. He mentioned the matter to his friends and sought their approval, which he readily obtained; and before the company commander had heard from headquarters, the subject of the proposed gift had become a town topic.

In the next issue of Donatello's weekly journal, *The Disinherited*, there appeared a brief but biting editorial headed: "Is it an Attempt to Bribe the Military?"

It ran as follows:

"It is reported, credibly, that a citizen millionaire of Fairweather has made the offer to the company of state soldiery in this city that he pay \$100 for each of the years to one member of the company who shall be found to be most excellent in the military drill. So open-faced a scheme is not necessary to further the capitalistic advantage. The soldiery of the State know already whom they serve. Should it be that the workers of the city make a similar offer, it would be hailed immediately as bribery. We are informed that the members of the company will vote whether they will accept this millionaire's offer. It will be interesting to watch, to see how many of the uniformed servants of capitalism will by this vote proclaim their allegiance to those their masters."

Donatello's folio sheet was limited in circulation,

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but within twenty-four hours after his editorial appeared in print it was being discussed in Fair-weather by all kinds of men in all grades of society, and was being commended as a proper characterization of a proposed donation, or else hotly denounced as an insult to an amiable gentleman, and an unwarranted and vicious attack upon the integrity of Company E of the National Guard. Nor was the membership of the company itself entirely free from the bitterness of the controversy.

Captain Murray looked forward with grave apprehension to the company meeting which had been called to take up the matter. He felt that it was now more necessary than ever that the men themselves should decide the question, but he knew that whichever way the vote went the result would be an unfortunate one.

It was Monday when the opinion came from regimental headquarters; it was Wednesday night after drill when the members of the company, pursuant to notice, met as a business organization. Captain Murray was in the chair. After two or three matters of secondary importance had been disposed of he read to the men Mr. Barriscale's written offer. At the conclusion of the reading he said quietly:

"Owing to the unfortunate controversy which has arisen over this proposal I have been tempted to take the matter into my own hands and make a decision, as I have a right to do. But it is my

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desire to preserve in the company a spirit of democracy so far as it may be consistent with military usages and discipline. I am therefore leaving the matter entirely to you. I have communicated with headquarters, and I find that there is no military objection to the acceptance of this gift. If you receive it it should be strictly under the conditions of the offer. I am ready to entertain a motion."

Captain Murray had no sooner finished speaking than Private Stone was on his feet.

"I move," said he, "that Mr. Barriscale's gift to Company E be accepted in accordance with the terms and conditions under which it is offered."

The motion was promptly seconded.

"Are there any remarks?" asked the chairman. He looked over his audience apprehensively, and appeared to be greatly relieved to find that no one seemed to care to discuss the issue.

"If there are no remarks," he continued, "I will put the question."

But before he could actually call for the vote, Ben Barriscale rose to his feet. He was recognized by the chair and said:

"I want to take this opportunity to repeat publicly what I have frequently declared privately, that inasmuch as this prize is to be given by my father I will not compete for it. I want to say also, in answer to many open charges and mean insinuations, that there are absolutely no strings attached



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to the gift. It is given in a spirit of unselfish generosity. I am sure that those who have opposed its acceptance have not the best interests of the Company at heart. They have been moved by jealousy and class hatred. We should not let these unjust suspicions and animosities influence us. We should grasp an opportunity that may never come to us again. I hope the vote will be unanimous for the acceptance of this gift. I call for the question."

The speaker had no sooner taken his seat than Private McCormack arose. The chairman recognized him and sighed. He felt that the storm he had anticipated was about to break.

"In view of the remarks just made," said McCormack, "I feel that it is my duty to speak. I am opposed to the acceptance of this gift. But I am not moved by jealousy or class hatred. I am not disputing the good intentions of the giver. His motive may be an entirely disinterested one. I do not know. But whether he intends it or not, or whether we intend it or not, if we accept this gift we will be under an obligation to him. If we were not we would have no sense of gratitude. The National Guard has been sufficiently criticized as it is, for taking the side of capital against labor in all clashes between them. No doubt we have been accused unjustly, but the fact remains that we are discredited in the eyes of thousands of good citizens. Don't let us add to our unpopularity by accepting

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from a capitalist this gift with its implication of value received or to be received. I hope the proposition will be voted down."

Before the applause that greeted McCormack's speech had begun to die down, Private Barriscale was again on his feet. His face was red with anger, and his eyes were flashing resentment. His wrath was kindled now not only against McCormack, but also against all those who, by their applause, had signified their approval of his words.

"I am surprised," he said, "that remarks such as you have just heard should be greeted with applause by any member of this company. The man who seeks to discredit his comrades in arms, who charges them with being pawns of capital, prejudiced against the poor, willing to accept bribes; such a man should be hissed, not applauded. He has labeled himself. He has shown you where he belongs. But what can you expect of a man whose bosom friend is the infamous Donatello, and whose associates are among the leading radicals of this city? I tell you, Mr. Chairman ——"

But he got no further. The hisses of disapproval which greeted his first sentences had now grown into a roar of protest. Halpert McCormack, in spite of his economic vagaries, was respected by and popular with his fellow guardsmen, and they would not listen to this bitter denunciation of him. The room was in an uproar. A half

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dozen men were loudly demanding recognition by the chair, a score of others were protesting volubly against Barriscale's ranting, while half as many more were declaring that he was entirely justified in all that he had said.

Then Captain Murray took the matter into his own hands. Those who chanced to be looking at him saw his jaws close together with a snap, and saw fire flash from his eyes. His gavel came down on the block with a mighty crash, once, twice, and thrice.

"Order!" he shouted. "Every man in his seat at once!"

When, a few seconds later, the tumult was quelled, he continued:

"In view of what has just taken place here, and for the sake of harmony in the ranks, I will myself decide what disposition shall be made of Mr. Barriscale's offer. As there is nothing else before the meeting I will entertain a motion for adjournment."

Corporal Manning made the motion, it was duly seconded, and the meeting was adjourned. But the controversy was not thereby ended, nor was Captain Murray's task made easier. He debated the matter in his own mind for twenty-four hours, and on the second day following the company meeting he went to the office of Mr. Barriscale at the mills, and was at once admitted into the big man's

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presence. But before he could make known his errand the mill-owner, apparently anticipating it, began:

"I have been expecting you, Captain. I think I know your errand. Perhaps you will now agree with me that the proper way would have been for you yourself to have accepted my gift on the start. It is very easy for one or two malcontents to make serious trouble when a matter like this is left to a popular vote."

"I may have made a mistake, Mr. Barriscale," replied the captain, "but I feel that it would have been just as serious a mistake for me to have decided the matter on the start. I feel that it will be an extremely serious and delicate task for any one to decide the matter in the present temper of the men of my company; and I have come to ask you to relieve me from this embarrassing situation."

"How can I relieve you, Captain?"

"By withdrawing your offer, or permitting it to be held in abeyance until the storm blows over."

Mr. Barriscale did not at once reply. Whether he was considering a course of action, or whether he had already made up his mind, could not be readily discovered. He knew of the incident at the company meeting. His son had told him of it in great detail. He knew also of the opposition that existed, both inside and outside the company, to the acceptance of the gift. He himself felt that, under

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the circumstances, it might be wise not to force the issue. To force it might easily result in his further humiliation. To permit the matter to be held up, as a favor to the company commander, could but redound to his credit. His course of action was therefore plain.

"Captain Murray," he said at last, and he spoke with great impressiveness; "it is far from me to add to the problems which must constantly perplex you, and I do not see how, in justice to you, I can do otherwise than accede to your request. The matter may be held in abeyance for an indefinite period."

The captain gave a sigh of relief, and held out his hand in gratitude.

"But," added Mr. Barriscale, clinging to his visitor's hand, "I must be permitted to express my surprise and dismay, that there should be in your company young men so ignorant, so prejudiced, so saturated with anti-government fallacies, as to oppose a gift like this from me because I chance to have some wealth and to be at the head of a prosperous corporation."

The captain answered lightly:

"Oh, I don't think we should take these young radicals seriously, Mr. Barriscale. They make liberalism an outlet for intellectual exuberance. They'll all get over it in time. Besides, we have only a few of them in the company anyway. Not enough to do us any harm."

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"That may be true, Captain; but you should not have one. Such men are a menace to society, and distinctly dangerous in a military organization. If we cannot depend on our organized militia in times of emergency, then indeed we will be at the mercy of the mob. As one having the best interests of the Guard at heart, permit me to urge that you rid your company of such disturbing elements. Weed out every man of radical tendencies without delay. I shall be more than happy to assist you in such a task."

Captain Murray thanked the mill-owner for his consideration and his interest and withdrew. But the relief he had felt in having the issue relating to the prize indefinitely postponed was now turned into a feeling of anxiety concerning some of his best men. He knew that Mr. Barriscale's offer of assistance was no more nor less than a veiled threat; and while Halpert McCormack's name had not been mentioned in the interview, there was no doubt that that young soldier would be made to suffer for his temerity at the company meeting, so far as it lay in the power of the millionaire manufacturer and his son to bring such suffering about.

## CHAPTER VII

**I**T had been nearly two years since Halpert McCormack and Ben Barriscale enlisted for service in the National Guard. They had one more year to serve, yet neither of them had a thought of leaving the service when the period of their enlistment expired. They had not only not tired of the militiaman's life with its duties and its tasks, they had found pleasure and profit in it. For each of them, in a different way, it had had its compensations and its satisfactions.

And each of them had merited and received promotion. First they had been advanced to the grade of corporal. And when, by reason of contemporaneous enlistment, the terms of the first and second sergeant expired simultaneously, and it became known that they would not reënlist, it was generally conceded that the two places would go to McCormack and Barriscale. But which one of them he would make his first sergeant was still a problem in the mind of Captain Murray. Both young men were excellent soldiers. Both of them had mastered every detail of company drill, and there were few movements, exercises or duties for the enlisted man

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to perform with which both men were not entirely familiar.

But the office of first sergeant is a most important one. A well-known military authority has written:

“ It has been said the captain is the proprietor of the company, and the first sergeant is the foreman. Under supervision of the captain he has immediate charge of all routine matters pertaining to the company.”

Captain Murray knew that whichever one of the two men he selected he would have an intelligent and efficient first sergeant. His hesitation was due to the fact that he wished to avoid any appearance of favoritism. Finally, remembering and following the still unfulfilled purpose and plan of Benjamin Barriscale, Sr., he decided to award the office as a prize to the man who should most successfully pass an examination in military tactics. In order to be entirely fair the test was thrown open to every enlisted man; and in order still further to secure absolute justice in the matter, Captain Cowperthwaite from Company M was called in to conduct the examination.

But, as every one knew would be the case, Corporals McCormack and Barriscale were the only ones who took the test. It was unusually thorough and severe, and was a combination of written,



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oral and physical exercises. Three days after it was held Captain Cowperthwaite made his report which was to the effect that Corporal Barriscale had won out by three points, the score standing nine-five and ninety-eight.

The report was read to the company at the armory on the night of the weekly drill. There was no demonstration from the ranks. The men were at attention, and anything like a demonstration would have been subversive of military discipline. Moreover, there was no enthusiasm among the enlisted men over Barriscale's success. Most of them liked Hal better and would have been glad to see him capture the prize. But they knew that Ben was a good soldier, would make an efficient orderly, and had won his promotion fairly, so they were content.

Immediately following the reading of the report Captain Murray announced the appointment of Corporal Barriscale to be first sergeant, and Corporal McCormack to be second sergeant, and directed that official warrants confirming these appointments be read accordingly.

When the company was dismissed Hal was the first to grasp the hand of the new first sergeant and congratulate him on his appointment. And he did it so frankly, with such good spirit and apparent sincerity, that his conduct should have gone a long way toward closing the breach that had opened be-

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tween the two boys on the night of Chick's rebuff, had yawned wide on the night of the meeting called to decide the question of acceptance of the prize offered by the senior Barriscale, and had never since been completely bridged over. There had, indeed, been no open hostility between them on account of these incidents. The matters had not been mentioned by either of them since their occurrence. But there was no companionship, no friendship. They were members of and officers in the same militia company, they had such communication with each other as their military duties required of them; that was all.

But both boys had grown, not only physically and mentally, but also in their outlook on life. Young Barriscale was less autocratic and arrogant, more approachable, more politic perhaps, yet he retained, nevertheless, much of his aristocratic feeling. He still believed that society was and should be divided into classes, and that while it was the privilege of some to command, it was the duty of others to obey. He approved of a democratic government indeed, provided it was sufficiently strong to hold the masses in check, and for this purpose its military arm should, in his opinion, be complete, invincible, and at all times ready for use.

McCormack, on the other hand, was still peace-loving, and more of a humanitarian than ever. He had always been a student and a dreamer, and the

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more he read and pondered, the more he saw of actual social conditions, the more thoroughly convinced he became that the salvation of humanity for the future lay in that leveling process by which the workers and the poor should be lifted to a higher social and economic plane, and the millionaires and aristocrats brought down to approximately the same level. Perhaps he was a socialist, he did not quite know. At any rate, he was not a radical. He believed in a democratic form of government, operated by virtue of its laws, and that its laws should be enforced, even though it became necessary to use its military arm in order to do so.

During the last two years he had seen much of Hugo Donatello. They had, on many occasions, discussed with each other the economic problems confronting the country and the world. But they could not quite reach a common ground. As time passed Donatello, who had become practically the leader of a group of organized radicals in the city, grew more and more extreme in his views, and through the medium of his journal, *The Disinherited*, advocated, every week, such direct action as would make the "workers of the world," without further delay, the masters of its wealth and pleasures. Quiet in manner, dreamy-eyed, soft-voiced except when aroused, persuasive in argument and eloquent in appeal, he exerted an influence over Hal the true extent of which the boy did not

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realize. The ideas of the young radical were so big, his humanitarian instincts apparently so strong, his theory of internationalism, as opposed to nationalism, leading to the ultimate and glorious brotherhood of all men, was so pleasingly and convincingly put, that it was difficult for this bank clerk, unschooled in the art of logic, to detect the fallacies with which the argument abounded. Yet the boy was not swept off his feet. By reason both of his ancestry and his education he was firmly grounded in the principle of patriotism, and he was not easily moved. His mind was receptive, it was not thoroughly convinced.

But his friendship with Donatello and his association with other social radicals in the city were commented on unfavorably in many quarters. When the matter reached the ears of his aunt, Miss Sarah Halpert, she brought him up with a round turn.

"What business have you, anyway," she asked him, "to be associating with that ordinary class of people? They're not your kind. What have you in common with them, I should like to know?"

"Well," replied Hal, "they have hearts and brains and lungs and stomachs just as I have. They get hot and cold and hungry and thirsty just as I do. And whatever pleasant things there are in life they are just as well fitted as I am to enjoy them. It seems to me that we have a good deal in common."

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"Stuff and nonsense!" she ejaculated. "You know very well what I mean. And you know you can't afford to be linked up with such a fellow, for instance, as this Donatello. Why, his paper is a disgrace to the city. Did you read what he had in it last week again about the National Guard?"

"Yes. He was rather severe on us."

"Severe! It was positively scandalous! Why, his sheet ought to be suppressed by the authorities, and he, himself, put in jail for a month and fed on bread and water."

"I'm afraid the fast-cure wouldn't be a prophylactic for radicalism, Aunt Sarah."

"There you go with your big words again! But this is no joke, young man. Bad company is bound to have its effect. The next thing you know they'll be putting you out of the National Guard."

"Perhaps I'll deserve it."

"If you do deserve it, I hope to goodness they'll do it! You just go along now and behave yourself, and drop your socialistic and anarchistic heresies, and shake your bad company, and be a soldier and a gentleman."

It was not long after this interview that Sergeant McCormack's qualities as a soldier and a gentleman were put severely to the test. There was to be an exhibition drill on a certain evening, at the armory, to which drill people of the city who were interested

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in the military proficiency of the men of Company E were invited.

There is always something attractive about this handling of rifles by an entire company, with its rhythmic movements, its click and clash, its sudden and startling changes, and the picturesque way in which it brings out the muscular alertness of the men. People were fond of coming to see such exercises. Moreover, following the drill, there were to be gymnastic contests, such as cane wrestling, pole pulling, tug of war, etc. It had been the aim of Captain Murray to keep his men interested by an appeal to their social and amusement-loving natures as well as to their ambition to excel in military proficiency. This was one reason why the company, as a whole, was always loyal and contented, and why it was possible to keep the ranks full of excellent soldierly material.

On this particular evening Sergeant McCormack, dressed in uniform, was hurrying from his home to the armory. His mother and his sisters were to go a little later in the car with his Aunt Sarah.

It so chanced that on the foot-walk of the Main Street Bridge, just where he had met him and had his first interview with him two years before, he met Hugo Donatello.

"I suppose," said the young radical, half jocosely, "that you now go for instruction of how

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to destroy the proletariat with the rifle, including me, myself?"

"Well," replied Hal, "so far as you are concerned, I don't know but you deserve to be destroyed, newspaper and all. That was a fierce article you had in last week about the National Guard."

"But was it not true, what I said?"

"No. The Guard is made up of right-minded men, trying to serve their country and their State in the fairest possible way."

"You do not yet know. No military is just or fair, nor can be. They are under orders of politicians. Politicians are controlled by capitalists. Capitalists conspire to crush workers. So there; what would you?"

He threw out his hands with a gesture which meant that there could be no other conclusion.

"I haven't got time to argue the matter with you to-night," replied Hal. "But I don't like to have you talk about our men as though they were a lot of thugs, nor our armory as though it were a nest of conspirators against the liberty of working-men. By the way, were you ever in our armory? Do you know what you're talking about when you write us down this way?"

"I have not had the pleasure to be ever in your armory, that is true."

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"Then come with me to-night and look us over for yourself."

"I would not be welcome there."

"I'll answer for that. Come as my guest. It's exhibition night. There'll be a lot of people there."

Donatello hesitated for a moment before answering. Then, as though suddenly making up his mind, he said:

"Very well. I will go. I am not too old, nor have I too much of the prejudice to learn."

First Sergeant Benjamin Barriscale, Jr., came into the drill-hall that evening and cast his eyes over the large number of people seated in rows of chairs against the side-walls of the armory, awaiting the assembling of the company. He had already mastered every detail of the duties of his new office. He felt that the men of the company respected him accordingly, and that by reason of his soldierly qualities rather than of any undue condescension on his part, he was becoming popular with the rank and file. The privates, armed and equipped, lounging about the hall or talking with friends at the side, saluted or spoke to him as he passed by. His keen eye discovered Hal's mother, as well as Hal's sisters and aunt, Miss Halpert, seated among the guests. He wondered what particular accomplishment Sergeant McCormack expected to exhibit that he had been vain enough to bring all the members of his family to see. McCormack was



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still a source of discomfort to him. If he could only humiliate him again in a legitimate way, as he had done in the competition for appointments!

Then First Sergeant Barriscale discovered some one else, and this discovery gave him a far greater shock than had the first one. He saw, among the visitors, leaning unconcernedly back in his chair, Hugo Donatello, socialist, radical, firebrand, slanderer of the government, insulter of the flag, defamer of the National Guard.

As one of these epithets after another came into his mind his anger rose. Ever since the incident at the flag-raising the fellow with his vicious weekly journal had been a thorn in the young man's flesh. Why should such a person force his unwelcome presence on reputable citizens and loyal soldiers in this manner? It was not only impudent, it was insulting.

Without further thought or consideration he crossed the drill-hall and confronted the objectionable visitor.

"You are Hugo Donatello, I believe?" he said.

The man looked up at him and answered quietly:

"That is my name, yes."

"I must ask you to leave the armory. Your presence here is most offensive."

For a moment Donatello stared at the officer incredulously. He could not quite believe that he had been ordered out.

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"I came," he said at last, "by the invitation of one, Mr. McCormack, a member of your soldiery."

The mention of Hal's name only served to increase Barriscale's wrath. His face grew red and his voice rose.

"I don't care how you came," he replied. "I am in command here for the present, and I order you to go."

Then Donatello, realizing the situation, became, in his turn, determined and angry.

"I am an American citizen," he declared. "I pay the tax. This military establishment, it is my money that helps to maintain it. I have the right here. I will not go."

"Then I shall have you ejected."

"At your peril that will be. I give you fair warning."

For a moment the situation was tense. People who were sitting near by and heard the dialogue and saw the faces of the two angry men, grew restless and apprehensive. Just what would happen no one could conjecture.

But Sergeant Barriscale, without another word, turned on his heel, strode back to the center of the hall and signaled to the drummer to beat the assembly. Hardly had the last tap rolled from the end of the drum-stick when the command was given to "Fall in!"

When the lines were properly formed and

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dressed, and the men brought to a "Right shoulder arms!" Sergeant Barriscale began, from memory, to call the company roll. As each man's name was called he responded distinctly: "Here!" and brought his piece smartly to an "order arms."

At the end of the roll-call the captain and his lieutenants had not yet come down from their quarters to the drill-hall. But while Barriscale could not account for the delay he did not regret it. It left him still in charge of the company. Facing the ranks he gave the command:

"Sergeant McCormack, step two paces to the front."

Without knowing the purport of the order, the second sergeant, accustomed to giving prompt obedience to all commands, passed around the right of the line, down to the center, stepped two paces to the front, halted and saluted his superior officer.

The first sergeant acknowledged the salute, then, with deliberate emphasis, in a voice that could be heard the length of the hall, he said:

"Sergeant McCormack, you will take a detail, consisting of one corporal and two privates, and conduct to the street one, Hugo Donatello, whose presence in this room is offensive to Company E and its guests."

For a moment Hal stood motionless and speechless. He had seen and known nothing of the brief interview between the first sergeant and Donatello.

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When he realized the meaning and force of the command that had been given to him, he was amazed and indignant. He brought his hand up sharply in a second salute.

"Hugo Donatello," he replied, "is my guest here this evening."

The first sergeant did not move, nor did the expression on his face change by so much as the lifting of an eyebrow. Again, more deliberately, more emphatically than before, in a voice that could be heard to the remotest corner of the drill-hall, he gave the command:

"Sergeant McCormack, you will take a detail, consisting of one corporal and two privates, and conduct to the street one, Hugo Donatello, whose presence in this room is an offense to Company E and its guests."

For Halpert McCormack it was the most tense moment that his life had thus far known. That the man whom he had brought as his guest should be thus publicly humiliated; that he, himself, should be deliberately chosen as the instrument by which such humiliation was to be accomplished; it was monstrous and unbelievable. Against such an outrage his whole nature cried out in revolt. For one moment, in a larger sense than he dreamed of at the time, he stood at the parting of the ways. Then the soldier within him prevailed. He made his decision. He saluted his superior officer, faced about,

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chose a corporal and two privates, ordered them to the front, and marched with them to the place where Donatello was still sitting, a quizzical smile on his lips, a dangerous light in his eyes.

In the audience there was the stillness of consternation. Women crouched back into their seats and put their hands to their faces. A few men rose to their feet and stared expectantly. No one could foresee just what would happen.

Sergeant McCormack halted his squad in front of the offending visitor.

"I am directed," he said, "by the officer in charge, to conduct you from the hall."

"And if I refuse to go?"

"I shall remove you by force."

It was all spoken quietly, deliberately, with determination on the one hand, with repressed indignation on the other. For a moment the young radical looked into the eyes of the young soldier. What he saw there evidently determined him in his course.

"So far that you are soldier," he said, "I defy you. So far that you are gentleman, whom I respect, I yield myself to your wish that I go."

He rose, took his place by the side of the sergeant, and, followed by the detail, they moved down the hall to the big street doors from which Donatello disappeared into the darkness. Then the squad returned to the line, the second sergeant directed his



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men to their places in the ranks, and, facing his superior officer he saluted and reported:

“Your orders have been obeyed, sir.”

The first sergeant returned the salute and responded concisely:

“Take your post!”

## CHAPTER VIII

**T**HE audience in the armory at Fairweather on the evening of Donatello's visit and expulsion had been treated to something more, and something of vastly greater moment, than a mere exhibition drill. They had not appreciated it at first, and while it was going on their attention had been too greatly strained to fully take it in. But when Sergeant McCormack reported the fulfilment of his orders, and started around the right of the line to take his post, it dawned on the people who had seen the incident that an exhibition of American military spirit had been witnessed, the spirit of the soldier as distinct from that of the civilian, that it would have been worth going far to see. Simultaneously, from all quarters of the hall, people began to applaud. The applause grew more vigorous and was punctured with loud hurrahs. Men and women rose to their feet and waved hands and handkerchiefs. Sarah Halpert mounted the chair in which she had been sitting, stood on it, and clapped her gloved hands until they burned.

First Sergeant Barriscale bowed to right and

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left. He naturally assumed that it was all a tribute to the prompt and vigorous action taken by him in ridding the room of an undesirable guest. Then some one yelled: "Three cheers for Sergeant McCormack!" and it occurred to Barriscale that the audience might also be expressing its appreciation of the splendid sense of military discipline, exhibited under the most severely trying circumstances, by the second sergeant.

In the midst of the applause and shouting, Captain Murray entered with his lieutenants, and the command was turned over to him. But he did not learn, until after the drill was over and the company had been dismissed, what had caused the commotion prior to his entrance. When he did find out what had happened he crossed the hall to where Sergeant McCormack stood talking with his mother and his aunt, and gave the boy's hand a mighty grip.

"I'm proud of you!" he said. "That was splendid! You're an ideal soldier!"

Whereupon Sarah Halpert, quite unable to restrain her enthusiasm, threw her arms around the neck of the second sergeant, and, much to his embarrassment, kissed him on both cheeks.

The next day the occurrence at the armory the night before was the talk of the town. The newspapers took the matter up and exploited it from one end of the State to the other. Sergeant Barriscale was commended for his prompt and vigorous



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action in ridding the armory of an avowed enemy to the government, while Sergeant McCormack received due credit for his soldierly obedience, under most embarrassing circumstances. But Sergeant McCormack's anger at the humiliation that had been put upon him was not appeased by any commendation of his soldierly conduct. Slow to wrath as he had always been, he was now thoroughly aroused and intensely indignant. If he could have withdrawn from the company and so severed the only relations between him and Barriscale, he would have done so at once. But it is not within the province of an enlisted man to resign, and he had no legitimate excuse for applying for a discharge, so nothing happened. But the breach that had opened narrowly between the two boys at the time of the flag-raising, and that had broadened dangerously on the night Chick was ordered from the stack-room, and had yawned wide, deep and impassable, since the night of the company meeting, was apparently never to be closed.

Hal was still employed at the Citizens' Bank. He had been promoted from one position to another until he had come now to be regarded as one of the most trusted and skilful employees of that institution. Only one shadow rested on his standing there, and that was cast by his open espousal of the cause of the discontented in society, and his association with the more radical elements in the

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city. He had not been accused of planning the destruction of the existing social order, nor of advocating the confiscation of the property of the rich. He was a student and a dreamer rather than a militant reformer. But his well-known attitude was bound to cast upon him the shadow of suspicion; and since the occurrence of the incident at the armory, and its wide exploitation, the shadow had deepened into a cloud, and more than one whispered accusation went forth against him, of disloyalty to the forces that had made this country great and prosperous, and of indifference to the flag which was a symbol of power and progress, and so regarded the world over.

Moreover, for nearly a year, Europe had been weltering in the bloodiest war of history. No one could tell how soon the red waves of it would break on the shores of the United States. It was a time when absolute loyalty was expected and demanded from every man who had the welfare of his country and of his fellow-citizens at heart. Had it not been that McCormack's social heresies were leavened to an appreciable extent by his apparent devotion to the National Guard, he would doubtless have found himself criticized more severely, and ostracized more effectually, than he had thus far been.

Yet, as it developed, his military connection was not sufficient fully to protect him. If he had been put to a test as a soldier, and had met it bravely and

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successfully, he was now to be put to a still greater test as a civilian.

It was about two weeks after the armory incident that Hal stood one day in the receiving teller's cage at the bank, at the noon hour, relieving the teller, who had gone to luncheon. He saw the senior Barriscale enter the lobby and pass back to the president's room. He thought nothing of it, as Mr. Barriscale was one of the directors of the bank and was frequently in to consult with the officers. But, ten minutes later, Mr. Winton, the president, crossed the counting-room to the teller's cage, and spoke to Hal.

"McCormack," he said, "will you please come into my room for a few minutes? Mr. Hanes will relieve you at the counter."

As they walked back together the president continued:

"Mr. Barriscale, who, as you know, is one of our directors, has called my attention to a matter which seriously concerns you. I believe the better way is for you to take it up with him in person. That is the reason I have called you."

Hal knew, instinctively, the nature of Mr. Barriscale's errand, and he knew that he had reached another crisis in his career. But, neither by word nor look, did he exhibit any apprehension.

In the president's room, in a chair by the table, the millionaire manufacturer was sitting. Big-

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bodied, square-jawed, with heavy moustache and closely cropped beard, he looked the determined and aggressive man that he was. He nodded as Hal entered the room, but he made no other sign, and gave no word, of recognition.

The president opened the conversation by saying:

"Mr. Barriscale desires to speak to you on a matter which he believes to be of considerable importance both to you and to the bank."

The manufacturer, accustomed to efficiency in business methods, went at once to the heart of his errand.

"I am credibly informed," he said, turning to the young man, "that you associate with a group of radicals in this community whose purposes and plans are entirely subversive of law and order. That you not only associate with them but that you sympathize with many of their aims, and assist, to an appreciable extent, in the spreading of their propaganda. It is hardly necessary for me to say that such activities are wholly inconsistent with your position in this bank. From what I hear, your attitude has already cost the bank something in the way of reputation for soundness and conservatism. I have said to Mr. Winton that you should be compelled at once to do one of two things, either cut loose absolutely from the associations and beliefs I have mentioned, or else give up your position in the bank."

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He had stated his case clearly, concisely and positively. The statement called for an equally clear, concise and positive answer, and that Hal knew he could not give. But he was not minded to yield without at least an attempt at justification.

"I have friends in the city," he replied, "among all classes of people, holding all kinds of beliefs. For myself, I am neither a conservative nor a radical; I have an open mind. I am looking for that which is best for my country and for her humblest as well as her most prominent citizens. I have tried to fulfil my duty to this bank in every way. If my associations or conduct have brought discredit on it in the slightest degree I am extremely sorry."

"I have no doubt of it, young man; but you are evading the issue. I am not charging you with robbing the bank, but with maintaining evil associations. It is that that is hurting us. For instance, you brought to the armory a few evenings ago, as your guest, a notorious firebrand, an enemy to this government, a defamer of the National Guard. I am proud of my son that he should have had him put into the street. But the fact has been spread broadcast that it was one of our employees who took the fellow there, and it has done the bank no good, Mr. Winton, no good."

He turned toward the president, and emphasized his conviction by bringing his hand down forcibly on the arm of his chair.

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"It certainly was an unfortunate occurrence," replied the president. "I cannot believe that McCormack realized that it might be injurious to us or he would not have been so injudicious."

"That's the point exactly," replied the manufacturer. "An employee who shows so little judgment in the choosing of his associates as this young man has shown, and so little discretion in his speech and conduct, is a constant menace to any financial institution. That is why," turning again toward Hal, "I have recommended to Mr. Winton that we get rid of you."

Get rid of him! Just as though he were a balky horse or a biting dog. Resentment flashed up in Hal's breast. He turned sharply on his critic.

"You don't have to get rid of me, Mr. Barriscale," he replied. "When the bank wishes me to leave I will go. In the meantime I reserve to myself the right to choose my friends and associates."

Mr. Barriscale turned again toward the president with a shrug of his shoulders and a significant wave of his hand, as if to say "I told you so," but he said nothing. Mr. Winton was the next to speak.

"I am sorry you assume this attitude, McCormack," he said. "We like you here. Your work is excellent. We want to keep you. But I am afraid we can do so only on the condition laid down by Mr. Barriscale. You must either give up your associates or your position."

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Hal looked from one to the other of the men and was silent. Across his mind flashed the oft-repeated declaration of Donatello that under the present social system not only business and trade, but the welfare, the happiness, the very lives of the vast majority of men were absolutely under the control of the money power centered in the few. Here was Mr. Barriscale, the heaviest stockholder of the bank, the most influential director, at the head of a corporation the daily balance of which at the bank was five times that of any other depositor, able, by reason of his money interest alone, to dictate the policy of the institution, even to the matter of the employment and discharge of its clerks; the very president himself being obliged to follow humbly in his wake. Hal's indignation rose with his resentment. He knew that Mr. Barriscale had decided to force him out, and that it would be useless now for him to argue or protest. He even doubted whether an unconditional surrender on his part would result in more than a temporary truce. He felt that he might as well meet the issue squarely.

"Very well, Mr. Winton," he said quietly, "since Mr. Barriscale's voice here is the controlling one, and since it is his wish that I shall go, there is nothing for me to do but comply with it. I am not ashamed of my beliefs or associations and I must decline to give up any of them."

Mr. Barriscale rose to his feet.



"I WILL GO TODAY, MR. BARRISCALE," RESPONDED HAL





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"That settles it!" he exclaimed. "I presume the young man will go at once, Mr. Winton."

"I will go to-day, Mr. Barriscale," responded Hal.

But the president began to protest.

"Oh, not to-day, McCormack. I don't think there is any such haste as that. I don't think Mr. Barriscale means that you shall go to-day."

The manufacturer brought the palm of his hand down heavily on the table.

"That is exactly what I mean, Mr. Winton," he replied; "to-day. We can't afford to harbor him for a moment longer than we have to. It would be an injustice to our stockholders and depositors."

To this outburst Hal made no reply. He turned to the president and held out his hand.

"I am grateful to you, Mr. Winton," he said, "for all the help and encouragement you have given me, and all the patience and kindness you have shown to me since I have been here. Good-bye!"

Amazed, chagrined, and shocked by the suddenness of it all, the president was unable to speak, but he held fast to the boy's hand with such a grip that Hal was obliged forcibly to withdraw it. When he had done this he bowed formally in the direction of the manufacturer, and turned and left the room. He stopped at the locker to get his hat and one or two of his personal belongings, and then went down the aisle and across the lobby to the big street door.

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As he passed the cashier's room that official saw him through the plate-glass window and called to him:

"Oh, McCormack, are you going to lunch? I wish you'd take these letters up to the post-office for me. John is out, and I'm anxious to get them off on the 12:40."

"With pleasure, Mr. Haldeman."

Hal reached his hand through the wicket, took the letters, and passed out into the street.

So, then, he had lost his job. It was an occupation of which he had grown fond, and in which he had become skilful. His two years of bank training would now go for naught. For it was not to be supposed that after his dismissal from one bank he would easily find employment in another. He must seek work now that would be less to his taste. When he went home and told his mother about it she wept for an hour. She did not blame him. She had implicit faith in his honesty and judgment, and she never questioned his beliefs. But when his Aunt Sarah Halpert heard of it she was beside herself. She sent for Hal to come to her house at once.

"Not but what you've got what you deserved to get," she told him, "but it was all so absurdly unnecessary. I've no love for the elder Barriscale; you know that. And I've no doubt he took malicious delight in throwing you into the street; but he was dead right in declaring that the bank couldn't afford to keep you. I've no sympathy for

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you; none whatever. Now go find a job somewhere and stick to it, and behave yourself. Hal," she said, after she had stormed at him to her heart's content, "if you need a little money, or a little help of any kind while you're looking around, just come to your Aunt Sarah." And when she kissed him good-night there were tears in her eyes, and there was fondness in her voice.

It was not many days before Hal found new employment as an accountant in a large wholesale house in the city. It was not so congenial a task as his old one. The salary was larger, it is true, but the hours were longer, the work more strenuous, the environment not so refined and agreeable. However, so long as he paid strict attention to business, his new employers were not concerned about his beliefs or his personal associations. Indeed, in spite of his own bitter experience, he continued to be on friendly terms with Donatello and his group of reformers and internationalists. The young radical had laid up nothing against Sergeant McCormack on account of his expulsion from the armory on a certain night, but he did not cease to denounce, with ever increasing bitterness, a civil and military system under which such an outrage, as he termed it, was possible. When Hal was forced from his position at the bank, Donatello's indignation knew no bounds. He declared that the boy was being crucified for his beliefs, at the hands of privilege, and

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that the incident was but another argument to prove that the money power and the capitalistic system the world over should be overthrown and abolished. And slowly, insidiously, but nevertheless effectually, under the tutelage of Donatello, the poison of radicalism, of internationalism as opposed to patriotism, of syndicalism as distinct from democracy, seeped into the boy's mind and colored his thought and his purpose. His connection with the National Guard in these days was indeed the only anchor which held him safely to his moorings as a loyal citizen of a great republic. And even at this anchorage he chafed, and from it would willingly have been free.

One afternoon, in the street, as he turned a corner near his place of business, he ran into Joe Brownell, second lieutenant of Company E. Brownell had been his friend since the day of his enlistment in the Guard, and, so far as a commissioned officer could do so without exhibiting partiality, he had been his supporter and adviser.

"I was just hunting you up, Hal," he said; "there's news. Lieutenant Morosco is going to resign."

"Indeed!" was the reply. "How is that?"

"Well, you know the Sturtevant people that he's been with so long have transferred him to the New York office. He goes east next week. That leaves a vacancy in the first lieutenancy."

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"Then you'll go up; and Barriscale will get shoulder straps?"

"That's just the point. That's a programme I don't like."

"Why not?"

"Oh, there are reasons. One is that I don't want the place. I'm not fitted for it, and I know it. The boys like me too well and I've no more sense of discipline than a ground-hog. If I ever had to command the company I'd collapse. Another reason is that—well, there's a pretty congenial crowd in officers' quarters now; I'd like to keep it congenial."

"You mean that Barriscale wouldn't be quite acceptable there?"

"To be frank with you, that's it exactly."

"But how are you going to help it? If you keep the second lieutenancy, Barriscale will get the first."

"Not if I can prevent it, he won't."

"How will you prevent it? He'll be entitled to the promotion."

"I propose to have you stand for election to the first lieutenancy."

"Me!"

"Yes, you. It's a matter of company election, you know; the boys would be glad to put you in, and it would be entirely satisfactory up above; I know what I'm talking about."

"But, Joe, I couldn't jump two grades. It wouldn't be fair. Besides, after what happened at

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the armory, and at the bank, and after all the comment that's been stirred up about me, it would never do for me to aspire to a commission. It's my place to crawl into my shell and stay there till my time's out."

"Nonsense! There are only two men in this town who would hate to see you get a commission."

"You might as well make it three, Joe. I would hate to see myself get it. With my views on social and economic problems and the proper functions of government, I've no business in the Guard anyway. I've no right to be a sergeant, much less to get a commission. The whole thing is entirely out of the question. So drop it, Joe. I appreciate your friendship and good intentions; but—drop it."

"Drop nothing! No one has ever criticized your conduct as a soldier. It's beyond criticism. And as for Ben Barriscale, you owe him nothing and you know it. I've kept my mouth shut through everything. It was my place to. But now, with no one but you to hear me, I've got to have my fling. I think that stunt of Barriscale's at the armory that night, while doubtless within the rules, was the most contemptible thing I ever heard of. And, if I'm rightly informed, even that was outclassed by his father's treatment of you at the bank. The whole thing gets my ——"

Hal interrupted him impatiently. "Joe," he said, "in a situation like this there's no room for

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resentments. But you're a loyal friend of mine and I'll be fair with you. I'll consider your proposition, and I'll let you know to-morrow what I've decided to do."

The next day, at noon, when the two men came together, Sergeant McCormack said:

"I've thought it all over, and I've decided not to stand for the election."



## CHAPTER IX

**I**T did not take long for the news of Morosco's contemplated resignation to filter through the rank and file of Company E. And every one assumed, as McCormack had done, that Brownell would go up, and that Barriscale would get a commission. There was no excitement concerning it, and little discussion. The second lieutenant was popular, and the enlisted men of the company were pleased with the contemplation of his prospective advancement. But Barriscale had not yet touched the popular heart, and, although no one criticized his qualities as a soldier or his efficiency as an orderly sergeant, at the same time no one became enthusiastic over the idea of his promotion. There was no outspoken opposition to his advancement among the men in the ranks; but one hanger-on of the company was not pleased with the outlook and did not hesitate to give expression to his thought. This was Chick Dalloway. He had never forgotten the night in the stack-room when both he and McCormack had suffered from young Barriscale's abuse. He had not yet ceased to ridicule the elder Barriscale's proposition to establish a fund for a prize, nor had he yet condoned the offense of which he believed the millionaire to be guilty in connection with Hal's loss of his position at the bank.

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Moreover, his heart still burned with resentment whenever he thought of the indignity that had been placed upon his friend and mentor on the evening of Donatello's ejection from the armory.

It was, therefore, in no pleasant mood that on the night when the news of Morosco's contemplated resignation first reached his ears, he walked down the street toward the place he called his home.

It was after drill; he had been at the armory; and ahead of him was a group of a half-dozen members of the company dressed in uniform, going in the same direction with him. They appeared to be in high spirits, they were talking and laughing freely, and, as they marched along, they began to sing one of the war songs made popular by the British troops on the western front.

For some reason, which he did not stop to dissect, their gayety seemed to jar on Chick's particular mood, and he decided to change his course at the next corner, and lengthen his journey home by the distance of a block.

But, as he turned eastward, he discovered, lying in front of him on the pavement, in the full light of the electric street lamp, what appeared to be a letter. He picked it up and examined it. It was an unsealed and unstamped envelope, bearing on its face only the word "Miss." Evidently the writer had been interrupted in his task of addressing the letter, and had laid it aside, intending to add other words

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later; or else, having got that far toward identifying the intended recipient of the missive, he had, for some unknown reason, changed his mind. The one preliminary word, however, was in a man's hand, and the envelope was not empty.

When Chick had made out what it was that he had picked up, it occurred to him that one of the singing boys ahead of him might have dropped it. He hurried to catch up with them, and called, but, in their exuberance of jollity, they failed to hear him.

It was not until he was almost in touch with them that his voice reached their ears.

"Say," he cried, "did any of you fellows drop anything?"

They suspended their musical efforts for the moment, stopped and faced him.

"Did we what?" asked one of them.

"Drop anything? let anything fall? lose anything out o' your pockets?"

"What are you giving us, Chick? Is this one of your practical jokes?"

"Honest to goodness, no!" declared Chick. "I thought one o' you might 'a' dropped something; say like a—a pocketbook, or something like that."

"Have we, boys? Has any one lost a pocket-book?"

The speaker faced his companions, each one of whom made immediate search of his pockets. Then,

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practically in unison, they declared that nothing of the kind had been lost.

"Why?" asked another one in the group. "Have you found a pocketbook?"

"No," replied Chick truthfully, "I ain't."

"Then what in Sam Hill are you holding us up for, and scrapping the finest music that ever came from human throats?"

"Oh," replied Chick, "I just wanted to know, that's all. If they ain't none o' you lost nothin', w'y then o' course I ain't found it."

"Boys," said a third one of the company, "are we going to stand for a thing like this? This levity at our expense must cease. He's a Hun. What shall we do with him?"

"Give him the g. b. in a blanket on the armory lawn next drill night. All in favor say aye!"

There was a chorus of ayes.

"Forward, march! Hip! hip! hip!"

The ranks were reformed and the fun-loving young fellows marched on.

Chick smiled. He knew that these boys were fond of him, and would sooner have suffered torture than have done him any harm. But he congratulated himself on his diplomacy. He knew that if he had told them that it was a letter he had found they would have insisted upon seeing it, perhaps upon reading it, since the envelope was unsealed. And some deep sense of chivalry warned the boy that a

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letter addressed to "Miss," whoever she might be, was not intended for the public eye.

But what should he, himself, do with it? He drew it from the pocket in which, by way of precaution, he had placed it, and again examined the brief superscription. He noticed now, also, that the envelope was soiled and marked by the trampling of feet. Evidently some one had dropped it on the pavement before the boys had come along, and they, not seeing it, had trodden on it. He looked up and down the quiet street, but no one was in sight save the disappearing group of young men in khaki who had already resumed their singing. It was obvious that he could not stand there and ask occasional passers-by if any one of them had lost a letter. It was just as obvious that it would be useless to carry it to the post-office, the police station or the drug store, and worse than useless to throw it back into the street. There was really but one reasonable thing to do with it, for the present at any rate, and that was to take it home with him. So he took it home. In the privacy of his little attic room, by the dim light of a small, smoky, oil lamp, he examined it once more. It occurred to him that by looking at the contents of the letter the name of the person to whom it belonged would be disclosed. So he slipped the folded sheet out of the envelope, but he still hesitated to read what was written there. It seemed to him that he was intruding upon some one's privacy,

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and, notwithstanding his lack of training and his crude environment, Chick was at heart a gentleman. He studied over the matter for many minutes before he finally decided that the purpose he had in view justified the apparent intrusion into some one's personal affairs. But when he had once cleared his mind of doubt he hesitated no longer. He unfolded the sheet and slowly and with difficulty, for he was no scholar, he picked out the words and sentences.

The letter was as follows:

"MY DEAR RACHAEL:

I am going to ask you in writing something that I haven't dared to ask you in person. I am going to ask you if you will marry me. It goes without saying that I am in love with you or I wouldn't ask you. We have been going together for about six months, and you don't seem to have got tired of me, so I am plucking up courage to ask you. You know I have a good position at the Barriscale works, and I guess you understand I'm a pretty decent fellow. The only thing in the way is that if this country gets into war I will likely have to go over there with Company E and fight. But I don't mind that if you don't. You know I'm a corporal now, but there's a good chance of my being promoted to be a sergeant, because there's going to be a vacancy soon, and I'm as likely to get the appointment as anybody.

Dear Rachael, I hope you love me and that you will answer this very soon and tell me you will marry me.

Yours with much love,

ALFRED.

P. S.—I never loved any other girl as much as I love you.

A."

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Well, it was a love-letter; a real, genuine love-letter. Chick had never seen one before. He had only heard of them and wondered about them. And, being a love-letter, it was, of course, a thousand times more important that he should keep secret the contents, than though it had been a mere business letter. But who was Rachael to whom the letter had been written? and, more especially, who was Alfred, who had written it? He was a corporal in Company E. That fact, of course, went a long way toward his identification, but it was not sufficient to make the identification complete. There were five corporals in Company E, and if any one of them bore the name of Alfred, Chick did not know it.

It had become very plain to him, however, that he must find the person who had written this letter, and deliver it up to him. That would be simply a gentleman's duty. In the meantime the missive would be secreted in an inner pocket of his waistcoat where no human eye would have an opportunity to gaze on it.

Before he turned out his light and got into bed Chick formulated his plan of action.

The next day he called at the office of Captain Murray.

"Do you happen to have," he asked him, "any list of the corporals in Company E?"

"Not here, Chick," was the reply. "My roster

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is at the armory. I can tell who they are, though."

"First names an' all?"

"Hardly that. I only know them by their last names. Why?"

"Oh, I just kind o' thought I'd like to know; that's all. I—I might want to ask one of 'em for a job."

"I see. Well, you go to Orderly Sergeant Bariscale. He'll have a list and he'll give you their full names."

"No, I wouldn't ask him. I don't want to be under no obligation to him. I'll find out some way."

And Chick did find out. It was a slow and laborious process. But by consulting the city directory, by asking personal friends of the corporals, by many a roundabout way, he was in possession, before nightfall, of the desired information.

And then he ran up against another difficulty. There were two Alfreds in the list; both of them young, unmarried fellows, liable to have sweethearts. He decided to take the bull by the horns and interview each of them in turn. He found Alfred Griffin at his place of employment, a big wholesale house in the lower end of the city. He was shipping clerk there. His coat was off, his sleeves were rolled up, and he was busy as a bee checking up half a roomful of barrels, boxes and bales ready to be sent out to customers.



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As Chick made his way across the room between piles of merchandise, Griffin saw him coming and greeted him cheerily.

"Hello, Chick!" he said. "What's the best word to-day?"

"The word o' hope," replied Chick. "You feelin' perty good to-day, yourself?"

"Fine!"

"Ain't disappointed about nothin'?"

"Not that I know of. Why?"

Chick didn't answer the question. He looked around cautiously to make sure that no one else was within hearing, then he asked suddenly:

"Say, do you know a girl by the name o' Rachael?"

"Do I know a girl by the name of Rachael?"

"That's what I ast you."

"Sure I do! Look here, boy, what have you got up your sleeve?"

"Nothin' much. Did you ever love any other girl as much as you love her?"

Alfred Griffin flung his checking book down on top of a barrel and stared at Chick in utter astonishment.

"Well, for the love of Pete!" he exclaimed. "What is it to you whether I love her at all or not?"

Chick was not in the least disconcerted at this outburst.

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"Oh, it ain't much to me," he answered coolly. "I jest thought I'd inquire whether you ever ast her to marry you."

This was too much for Alfred bearing the surname of Griffin. He burst into a hearty laugh.

"Chick," he said when he caught his breath, "you're the limit. I haven't the ghost of an idea what you're driving at; but let me tell you, confidentially, that I think you've got the wrong pig by the ear. The fellow you want to investigate is Corporal Fred Lewis. He's got a girl by the name of Rachael, and I know her. And any day he wants to yield up his claim on her, whatever it is, I'll be glad to drop into his shoes. Do you get me? Now, is that what you want to know?"

"W'y, I heard one o' you fellows had a girl by the name o' Rachael, and I didn't know which one it was."

"Well, what did you want to know for?"

"I'll tell you. You see, I'm lookin' for a job. Not a stiddy all day job, you un'erstand; jest pickin' up around mornin's. An' I didn't know but what her folks might want such a man. And ef they did, I might git a recommend from whichever one o' you fellows is sparkin' the girl. See?"

Alfred, surnamed Griffin, looked at him for a moment quizzically.

"Chick," he said at last, "you're the most wonderful prevaricator that has happened since the days

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of Ananias. I don't know *why* you're lying to me like that; I only know you *are*. Now you go and hunt up Fred Lewis if you want to, and you pull this stuff on him, and see what you get. But don't tell him I told you about Rachael. My life wouldn't be worth a penny whistle if you did. He's mighty sensitive about that girl."

Chick was grinning broadly. He did not resent the charge made against him. He knew that his accuser was in the best of humor. He had the information he wanted, and he turned to go.

"All right!" he said. "Much obleeged to you. No hard feelin's. I'll do as much for you some time. Fred Lewis works down to the Barriscale, don't he?"

"Yes; you'll find him there in the assembling department. He's got a good job. If he wants to marry Rachael he can afford to."

"Sure! I won't tell him you said so, though. He can't pick nothin' out o' me."

"That's the talk! Good luck to you! Go to it!"

He waved his hand gayly as the boy clumped out of the wareroom.

Chick went on down street toward the Barriscale plant, but he did not enter it. It was within a quarter of an hour of quitting time anyway; so he hung around in the neighborhood until the men came out, hundreds of them, and, separating into

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groups, entered the four streets that converged upon the plaza fronting the mills. His quick eye detected young Lewis in the crowd, in company with a fellow employee, and, walking a few rods in the rear, he trailed along after them.

It was not until half a dozen or more blocks had been covered that the two young men separated, and the one whom Chick sought went on alone. He walked rapidly and it was no light task for the boy with the physical handicap to overtake him. But he did overtake him eventually, and, half out of breath, shuffled along beside him.

The young man, seeing who his companion was, made no show, either of pleasure or displeasure. He looked anxious and worried, as though his mind was absorbed in the thought of some impending misfortune.

"Oh, is that you, Chick?" he said quietly. "Going my way?"

"Yes, for a block or two," wheezed the boy. "Thought you might like to have company."

"Sure! Come along! Am I walking a little too fast for you?"

"Oh, I guess I can keep up all right."

But the young man slowed down in his gait, nevertheless, and made it easier for the boy to keep alongside.

For a little while after that neither of them spoke, Chick because he had not yet recovered sufficient

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breath, and Lewis because he was not in the mood for talking.

It was Chick who at last broke the silence.

"Lemme see!" said he, "your name's Alfred, ain't it? They call you Fred; but your right name's Alfred, ain't it?"

"Yes. Why?"

The young man seemed to evince little curiosity, and to ask the question more as a matter of form than because of a desire to seek information.

"Oh, nothin' much," replied Chick. "Only, if you was, now, writin' a letter, say to a girl, you'd sign your name Alfred, I s'pose?"

Young Lewis awakened out of his apparent lethargy and glanced down curiously at the boy who was, with some effort, keeping up with him.

"Why, I suppose so," he said. "What do you want to know for?"

Chick did not reply to the question, but, after a habit he had, he asked another one instead.

"And if you was writin' to any girl, you'd most likely be writin' to a girl name o' Rachael, I s'pose?"

The young fellow stopped suddenly, faced sharply toward the boy, and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Look here, Chick!" he exclaimed; "have you found anything?"

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"Me? Found anything?" repeated Chick, in apparent surprise.

"Yes; a letter, or anything like that?"

"Why, have you lost one?"

"Chick! Don't keep me in suspense! If you've found my letter, tell me. I've worried myself pretty nearly into my grave over it, already."

"I ast you, have you lost a letter?" Chick was very resolute and determined.

"Yes," was the equally resolute reply, "I've lost one. Have you found it?"

They were standing on a quiet street corner, scarcely a block away from the Lewis home. One or two men passed by and spoke to them, but the greetings went unheeded.

"I've found a letter," said Chick; "but how do I know whether it's yourn or not? Who was it to?"

The young fellow swallowed awkwardly before replying, and grew red in the face. His first impulse was to resent the question as an unwarranted intrusion into his private affairs. But, on second thought, he knew that such an attitude on his part, especially toward Chick, would be extremely poor policy.

"Why," he exclaimed finally, "it was to a girl by the name of Rachael, and it was signed 'Alfred.'"

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"That's all right so far," assented Chick. "But they's lots o' Rachael's in the U. S., and the world's full of Alfreds. Tell me what was in it."

"Oh, now, look here, Chick! That's not necessary. Surely I've identified the letter sufficiently, and I'm entitled to have it."

But Chick was obdurate. "No," he said, "a man can't be too careful about love-letters. If this here letter should git into the hands o' the wrong party my goose would be cooked. You got to tell me what was in the letter 'fore I give it up."

Alfred Lewis looked up the street, then down the street, and then at Chick.

"Well," he said finally, "I asked Rachael to marry me."

"That's right!" assented the boy. "You sure did. Now, was they any p. s. on the end, or wasn't they?"

"I believe there was."

"What was in it?"

"Look here, Chick! Confound you! you're getting too blamed inquisitive."

But Chick straightened up as far as his deformed shoulders would permit, and thrust his hands determinedly into his pockets.

"I got to know," he said.

There was apparently no escape, and the young lover, with scarlet face and stammering tongue, blurted out:

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"Why, I told her I never loved any other girl as much as I did her. Does that satisfy you?"

Chick did not answer the question. Instead, he thrust one hand deeper into his pocket, drew forth the precious missive and handed it to the writer thereof, who, having glanced at it exteriorly and interiorly, gave a great sigh of relief. Then followed a shower of questions as to when, where and how the letter had been found, to all of which Chick not only gave complete and satisfactory answers, but he also entertained his listener with a full account of his own Sherlock Holmesian efforts in running down the writer.

At the conclusion of the narration young Lewis grasped the boy's hand.

"Chick," he declared, "you've saved my life. What if the other fellows had got onto it! They'd have made the town too hot to hold me. That job was worth money, Chick; yes, it was worth money."

He thrust his hand into his pocket as he spoke, drew forth a purse, extracted therefrom a bill with a green back, and held it out to the boy. But Chick waved aside the gift disdainfully.

"No," he said, "you can't pay me nothin'. That was jest a friendly job. But some day, when I git to be a member o' the comp'ny, I might want a favor; see? Then I'll ast you."

The owner of the restored love-letter again grasped the boy's hand.



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“Chick,” he said warmly, “whenever you want any favor that I can do for you, no matter what it is, you come to me and tell me, and I’ll do it if it takes a leg! Do you understand?”

“I un’erstand.”

## CHAPTER X

**T**HREE days after Hal's interview with Brownell, First Lieutenant Morosco sent in his resignation, it was promptly accepted, he was duly and honorably discharged, and he left the service of the Guard. In due time an order came down from the Governor, through his Adjutant-General, and the Brigadier-General commanding the brigade, to the Colonel of the ——th regiment, of the following tenor:

“Colonel Robert M. Wagstaff is hereby authorized and directed to hold an election for First Lieutenant of Company E, ——th Regiment Infantry N. G. P. to fill vacancy caused by the resignation of First Lieutenant David E. Morosco, making prompt returns to these Headquarters.

By order of

BRIG.-GEN. SAMUEL A. FINLETTER,  
*Commanding 3rd Brigade.*”

Whereupon an order of similar purport was directed by Colonel Wagstaff to Major Mowbray Huntington, directing him to proceed to Fairweather and hold such election in person. Notice of the coming election was posted in the armory ten days prior to the time set for it; and then the real campaign for the office began.

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It had been taken for granted that Second Lieutenant Brownell would succeed to the first lieutenancy, and that First Sergeant Barriscale would be chosen to fill the office thus made vacant. But when Brownell declared that he was not a candidate for the office of first lieutenant, and would not accept the place if he were elected to it, discussion as to what ought to be done was rife at the armory.

Barriscale at once declared himself a candidate for the position, and argued that, in accordance with all the precedents of promotion, he was entitled to it. But there appeared to be a growing undercurrent of opposition to his candidacy. He had not yet become sufficiently popular with the enlisted men as a body to be their unanimous choice for any elective position of honor in the company. And those who opposed Barriscale's election united, without exception, on Second Sergeant McCormack as their choice.

When Hal heard of the movement to elect him to the first lieutenancy he tried his best to put a stop to it. He insisted that he was not a candidate, that he was well satisfied with his present position, and that at the end of his term of enlistment—and he had now less than a year to serve—he fully intended to leave the Guard. He besought his particular friends in the company to aid him in putting an end to the movement in his behalf, but, although presumably they complied with his wish, it would not

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down. Enlisted men came to him and begged him to reconsider his decision. Civilians met him on the street and urged him to stand for the election. To every one he turned a deaf ear. He knew what his reasons were for declining; to him they were good and sufficient; he had made up his mind and that was the end of it.

Brownell besieged him again and again.

"Hal," he said, "you must be reasonable and accommodating and give us a chance at least to vote for you. If you don't run Ben will have no opposition; and if he's elected, heaven help us! there'll be no living with him!"

"I've already told you," replied McCormack, "that I want to do everything on earth I can for you, because you've been very good to me; but I can't do that. I like the military life. In a way it's splendid and thrilling. It's the fascination of it that makes it dangerous. There can be no greater menace to the liberties of a people or to the peoples of the world than the spirit and practice of militarism. Look at Germany, dominated, burdened and brutalized by her military machine, and striving, with no indifferent success, at the cost of millions of lives and seas of blood, to put every nation in Europe under her boot and spur. I tell you, Joe, I'm not a good enough soldier, nor a good enough patriot, to take a commission in the National Guard."

At that Brownell became vexed and impatient.

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"It's just because Germany," he declared, "has run amuck among civilized nations, like a wild beast, that she must be subdued like a wild beast, with powder and steel; and unless I lose my guess, the day is not far distant when we as a nation have got to pitch in and help subdue her. In a time like this, Hal McCormack, you can't leave the Guard without disgracing yourself, and you can't turn down a commission without doing a gross injustice to every one of your comrades in arms."

But Sergeant McCormack was obdurate, and Brownell accomplished nothing in any interview.

And then, three days after the notice had been posted, Sarah Halpert sent for her nephew. She always had to send for him when she wanted particularly to see him. She declared that when anything especially important was on, he studiously avoided her society.

"It's not that I'm so particularly anxious to see you first lieutenant," she said to him. "I don't give a rap which one of you is elected. It's your lack of spirit that I deplore. To think that you, the son of your father, and the grandson of your grandfather, should talk about sneaking out of the Guard when your time's up; and then to think that you should become a regular slacker just to avoid a contest for an honorable office! Hal McCormack, I'm ashamed of you and disgusted with you! There!"

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"But, Aunt Sarah," protested Hal, "I don't want the office; why should I fight for it? I don't want to be a lieutenant, nor a major, nor a brigadier-general. I'm satisfied to be a second sergeant in the company, and a private in the army of the world's workers for peace when my term of enlistment is out."

"Now, stop that pacifist, socialistic nonsense! This is no time for it. The thing for you to do is to prove that you've got red blood in your veins, as you have. If your mother had one particle of spunk in her, which she never did have, she'd make you go without your dinners till you come to your senses. Now do as I tell you; stand for that election. Show the kind of stuff that's in you. Fight for it to the last ditch."

Hal knew there was no use of arguing with his Aunt Sarah, and he did not try to reason with her further. But when he left her she had not convinced him that it was his duty to seek the office of first lieutenant.

Among those who besought him to become a candidate, perhaps the hardest one to refuse was Chick, or, as he had come to be known since the evening when, in a spirit of wrath and contempt, Barriscale gave him the title, General Chick. For Hal had no greater admirer, and no more devoted follower in the company, nor indeed in the whole city, than Chick Dalloway.

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It was at the armory just prior to the Thursday evening drill that Chick said to him:

"I couldn't stay in the company no longer if Sergeant Barriscale was elected first lieutenant."

"Why not, Chick?" asked Hal.

"Oh, he'd lord it over everybody," was the reply. "He's bad enough as first sergeant. I don't know what he would be if he was first lieutenant. You've got to run, Sergeant 'Cormack; you've simply got to run. We'll see that you're 'lected, all right. I'll work my hands an' feet off, an' my head, too. An' they's plenty more of us'll do the same thing. I know. I've heard the boys talk. Won't you run, Sergeant 'Cormack?"

"No, Chick. I'm sorry to disappoint you; I'm awfully sorry; but I can't run. It—it wouldn't be quite right for me to run, Chick, feeling as I do about certain things."

"What things, Sergeant 'Cormack?"

"I'll tell you some time. In the meantime you stay with the company and take whatever comes, and make the best of it, like a good soldier."

"All right! if you say so I will."

The assembly was sounding, the men were taking their places in the ranks, and Sergeant McCormack hurried away to the fulfilment of his duties.

It was after the drill was over and the company had been dismissed, and while Hal stood talking to

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a little group of his friends on the drill floor, endeavoring not only to dissuade them from putting forth any efforts in his behalf as a candidate, but also to smother, if possible, any efforts that might be put forth by others, that Barriscale approached him. This was an unusual thing for the first sergeant to do. Heretofore the two men had been "on official terms," that was all. Outside the ranks the second sergeant had been studiously ignored by the orderly. It was something of a surprise, therefore, when Barriscale came up and asked Hal for the privilege of speaking to him a moment in private. The request was willingly granted, and the two men walked away to a remote corner of the drill-hall. When they were well out of ear-shot of the others Barriscale said:

"The reason I want to speak to you is that I want to know your real attitude concerning this election. I want to get it straight. Do you propose to stand for the election or don't you?"

Notwithstanding the somewhat imperative form of the question, and the somewhat domineering manner of the questioner, Hal replied good-naturedly:

"There's no secret about my attitude. I've said over and over again that I'm not a candidate."

"I know you've said so. But what I want to know is whether or not you mean it?"

Hal looked down at him in surprise.



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"Why do you ask such a question as that?" he said.

"Because it's come to me pretty straight that all this talk about your not running is simply to pull the wool over my eyes, catch me off my guard, make me think I'll have no opposition, and come in at the last minute with a whirlwind campaign and sweep me off my feet. If there's any game of this kind on foot I want to know it."

For a moment Hal was too greatly shocked and too deeply amazed to reply. He could not quite understand why he should be accused of such trickery.

"Would you suspect me," he said at last, "of being guilty of playing this kind of politics?"

"I don't know," replied Barriscale bluntly. "I wouldn't have thought it of you two years ago; but it's said that a man is no better than the company he keeps. And the crowd you've been running with lately will bear watching every hour of the twenty-four. But that is neither here nor there. What I want to know is whether you are going to stand as a candidate for the first lieutenancy?"

At last Sergeant McCormack's wrath was roused.

"Do you think," he asked angrily, "that your insolent manner and language entitle you to that information?"

"I think," was the equally angry reply, "that I was a fool to expect decent treatment from a

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Guardsman who has no respect for his country or his flag."

With other men, in other surroundings, the next thing would have been blows. But these men were soldiers, and this was the armory, and it was inconceivable that the place should witness such a physical encounter as befits only the barroom or the slums. Simultaneously the two men turned on their heels and started back across the hall. But another thought came into Barriscale's mind and he swung around and again faced his rival.

"I want to give you notice now," he declared savagely, "that if you do oppose my election, either with your own or any one else's candidacy, I shall file charges against you and demand your dismissal from the Guard."

Suddenly Hal seemed to have recovered his composure.

"Indeed!" he inquired calmly. "On what ground?"

"On the ground of disloyalty to the Guard and treason to the flag."

"So! And if I don't oppose you?"

"Then I'll let you alone, as I have done. And when your time's up you can get out of the service quietly, without disgrace."

"I see. In other words you would buy me off."

"Call it what you choose. I've no doubt you're purchasable."

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McCormack came a step closer to the first sergeant and looked him squarely in the eyes.

"Barriscale," he said quietly, "I have decided to be a candidate for the office of first lieutenant of Company E."

So the die was cast. The contest was on. Threats, insolence and insult had accomplished what the entreaties of friends and relations had failed to bring about.

When Lieutenant Brownell was told of Hal's decision to stand as a candidate he was delighted beyond measure. He said little openly, but the grip of the hand that he gave the second sergeant when he saw him, meant more than words.

As for Sarah Halpert, when she heard of it she ordered her car to be brought to the door, and she went at once to see Hal's mother. She swept into the little house like a west wind, and caught her sister in her arms and kissed her twice.

"You've got a boy now," she said, "that you can be proud of. He's turned out to be a real McCormack after all. He's got soldier blood in his veins."

"I'm afraid so," sighed little Mrs. McCormack. "I'm sorry he got into it. From what Hal says it's going to be a fight, and I do hate fights."

Sarah Halpert's eyes snapped.

"Why, you miserable little pacifist!" she exclaimed. "Don't you know that you've got this splendid country to live in because some one was

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willing to fight for it? Don't you know that the only hope for civilization in the world to-day lies in the fact that red-blooded men by the millions are willing to face the German beast on the battle-field? You just get down on your knees and thank God that you've got a boy who isn't afraid to go into a fight, either of bullets or of ballots!"

And she swept out of the house with even more vim than she had entered it.

She didn't send for Hal this time. She didn't want to see him. She was afraid he might put a stop to her electioneering activities. But if there was another enlisted man in Company E whom she did not interview on the subject of the approaching election it was because, after diligent search, she couldn't possibly find him.

When Hal heard about it he went to her and protested.

"For goodness' sake, Aunt Sarah," he exclaimed, "stop it!"

"Stop what?" she inquired, with assumed innocence.

"This electioneering business. You're queering the whole thing. It's one of the unwritten rules of the service that 'military merit alone gives any right to claim military preferment.' The idea of a man's aunt making him ridiculous by going around soliciting votes for him from every member of the company!"

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"Well," she replied, "you needn't go into a decline over it. I couldn't raise a promise out of a single mother's son of 'em!"

"Of course you couldn't. It's one of the unwritten rules of the service that an enlisted man shall not tell for whom he is going to vote in a company election."

"There you go with your 'unwritten rules' again. What do I care for 'unwritten rules,' or written ones either for that matter? You've got to win this election; and if you do win it, somebody's got to electioneer for you. You're positively no good at all at soliciting votes for yourself."

"I know. I don't want to be elected as a result of soliciting votes for myself. I want to be elected on my merit as a soldier, or not at all."

"Fiddlesticks! You haven't the faintest conception of your duty to yourself. Why, Ben Barriscale is pulling every string he can get his fingers on. His father and his mother and his sister and his sweetheart are all out campaigning for him with bells on. Somebody's got to do something for you, young man, or you'll get left as sure as your name's Halpert McCormack!"

But, at the end of the interview, impressed with Hal's argument against her undue activities, she promised to be more circumspect in the promotion of his cause, and he had to be satisfied with that.

Sergeant McCormack had expressed a wish that

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there should be no open propaganda in his behalf. He felt that an aggressive fight might develop into a bitter one, and that such a campaign would not be "for the good of the service."

But Sergeant Barriscale was not so considerate or conscientious. From the moment when Hal informed him that he would be a candidate he knew that he had a real fight on his hands and he set about the marshaling of his forces. He brought to bear in his favor every influence of which he, or any member of his family, or any civilian friend, was possessed. He used every possible argument against Sergeant McCormack's promotion to the first lieutenantcy that he or any of his supporters could think of. He denounced the patent unfairness of any one being permitted to jump two grades over the head of a present deserving superior officer. He characterized his opponent as a socialist, a radical, a dreamer, a pacifist, a nondescript citizen hesitating on the border of absolute disloyalty to his government in a time when virile patriotism was needed as never before. All the resources of political skill were resorted to to circumvent his rival.

Under these conditions it was impossible to confine interest in the campaign to the rank and file of Company E. The whole city was stirred with the contest. Partisans arose on every hand. The life of the citizen soldier was not a happy one. He was besieged from all quarters. To some of them the

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European battle line would have been far to be preferred. Yet it was generally conceded that the chances, if the word could properly be used when the outcome had been figured with such mathematical precision, favored Sergeant Barriscale. He had more powerful friends, he was a more aggressive fighter, he handled every detail of the campaign with far more skill and thoroughness than did his opponent.

On the evening before the election the contest reached its apparent climax. It was not a drill night, but a score or more of the enlisted men had gathered at the armory, and were standing or sitting in groups about the drill-hall.

At nine o'clock Sergeant Barriscale came in. He came with a confident stride, and a look of contentment on his face.

"It's all over," he said, "but the shouting. Giving McCormack the benefit of every doubtful vote, I shall win by a clear majority of seven."

General Chick, standing in the group that had gathered about the candidate, heard him. It was not a pleasant thing for Chick to hear. His whole heart had been set on the success of Sergeant McCormack. Daytime and night-time, in season and out of season, whether he met with rebuff, ridicule or condescension, he exploited the virtues of and solicited votes for his beloved candidate. To have Barriscale now, on the eve of the election, declare

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with such an air of confidence that he was sure to win out, was more than Chick could stand.

"That ain't so!" he shouted, shrilly. "You're licked, and you know it!"

The first sergeant's face reddened, and the eyes he turned on the boy were blazing with wrath.

"You insignificant little runt!" he cried, "how dare you speak to me!"

He faced the other way as if in disgust at the incident, and then he faced back again to say to the amazed and amused listeners:

"I want to give notice now that when this thing is all over, no matter which way it goes, I shall take measures to rid the armory and the company of this pestiferous, boot-licking dog-robber."

And General Chick replied gamely:

"Jest try it on! I come into this comp'ny long before you did, and I'll be in it with a major-general's commission long after you've been invited to git out."

The crowd laughed, and the incident was closed, but Barriscale's confident boast that he would be elected by a majority of seven votes had sunk deep into Chick's heart, and he felt that something must be done immediately to try to save the day.



## CHAPTER XI

**G**ENERAL CHICK did not wait long at the armory after his verbal encounter with Sergeant Barriscale. He knew that he could accomplish nothing by remaining there, and he had a feeling that if he could only see McCormack and talk the situation over with him some plan might be evolved by which threatened defeat would be averted.

He shuffled across the armory floor and out through the big front door under the tower into the street.

He wondered whether Ben Barriscale really knew what he was talking about when he claimed to have a majority of seven votes, or whether his declaration was simply a bluff made for the effect it might have on his listeners. But he had seemed so confident; his campaign had been so thorough and systematic, that now, at the close of it, he was more than likely to be correct in his estimate of the result. It was a disheartening conclusion to reach, but it was a conclusion that could not well be avoided. At any rate there was but one thing to do now, and that was to see Sergeant McCormack, tell him of his

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rival's boast, and consider what, if anything, could be done.

He knew where McCormack lived, and he knew what route to take to get there. It was already after nine o'clock, and there was no time to lose. It was a splendid, moonlight August night and there were many people in the streets. On the bridge that crossed the river a dozen loiterers stood, singly and in pairs, watching the shimmer of moonlight on the passing waters. One of them spoke to Chick as he hurried by, but the boy did not stop to respond; he gave a quick word of greeting and moved rapidly on. With every step that he took he grew more and more impressed with the importance of his errand, and with the necessity of haste in delivering it. He felt that the sooner he could reach McCormack the greater would be the possibility of averting the threatened disaster.

In front of the Fairweather Club a man stood in evening clothes, anxiously scanning the faces of those who passed by. When he saw Chick coming a look of relief spread over his countenance.

"Chick!" he called, "you're just the man I'm looking for. I want you to take a letter to Mayor Toplady for me. It's got to be delivered before ten o'clock."

Chick paused long enough to reply.

"Can't do it," he said. "Ain't got time."

"There's a dollar in it for you. You can take the

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next car that comes along. You'll get there in twenty minutes."

Chick opened his eyes wide. There were not many days in the year in which he earned a whole dollar. But to-night the offer did not tempt him.

"I'd like to 'commodate you," he said; "but it's jest as I told you; I ain't got time. I'm in too much of a hurry."

"I'll give you two dollars, Chick. It isn't every man that comes along that I can trust. And this is important."

But the boy was still obdurate.

"I tell you I can't do it!" he exclaimed. "If they was fifty dollars in it for me I couldn't do it. I've got an important errant myself."

And, for the purpose of shutting off further argument and entreaty, he hurried on.

At the next corner he could take a street-car that would carry him to within three blocks of McCormack's home. He thrust his hand into his pocket for the necessary nickel and found, to his dismay, that he was penniless. So there was nothing for him to do but to walk the mile up the hill, unless he could quickly find some one who would lend him the required car fare. At that moment, as good luck would have it, he discovered Corporal Manning, of Company E, just entering Wolf's drug store. He knew that Manning would lend him the money, for Manning was a friend of his and had already done

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him more than one favor. Moreover, he believed that the corporal was friendly to McCormack and would favor his candidacy.

As Chick entered the drug store Manning was just seating himself on one of the revolving stools at the soda-fountain counter. He saw the boy and called to him.

"Just in time, Chick!" he exclaimed. "Come and have a soda on me."

Now the love of soda-water was Chick's besetting sin. He himself acknowledged that far too many of his hard-earned nickels went to appease his desire for his favorite drink. But to-night, even though a sudden thirst overwhelmed him, he put the temptation resolutely aside.

"No," he said, "I'm jest as much obleeged to you, but I ain't got time. I've got use for the nickel, though," he added, shuffling up to the counter, "if you'd lend me one till to-morrow."

"Sure!" replied Manning, cheerfully. "Make it a dime." He produced the coin and handed it to the boy. "But what's the great hurry?"

Chick looked cautiously over the near-by patrons of the place before answering. No one was within hearing. Perhaps he might get a valuable suggestion.

"Well," he whispered, "I'm goin' up to see Sergeant 'Cornack. Somethin's got to be done right off."

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"Why? What's the matter?"

"I jest heard Sergeant Barry say he's goin' to beat my candidate by seven votes. He told the bunch up to the armory. I can't stan' that. We've got to do somethin' quick."

Manning set his glass back deliberately on the counter.

"I don't believe it!" he said. "He's just throwing a bluff. Charlie Moore and I went over the whole situation not more than half an hour ago; and the way we figure it Hal will come under the wire with three votes to spare."

"You countin' on Stone an' Hooper?"

"Sure, we're counting on them."

"That's where you're way off. They're for Barry."

"It can't be. They're as good as promised for Hal."

"Well, I heard Stone say, myself, that him and Hooper was for Barry because they had to be."

Corporal Manning sat for a moment in grim silence. "Then I don't know," he said finally, "who you can depend on. Maybe Barriscale will get away with it after all. He's a crack-a-jack at wire-pulling. Did you say there's a bunch of the boys up at the armory?"

"Yes; dozens of 'em."

"I guess I'll go up there myself and see how the land lies."

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## THE GUARDSMAN

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"I wisht you would. An' I'll go on up to 'Cormack's an' see what can be done."

Chick shuffled hastily out, but Manning rose from his seat, went to the door, and called after him.

"You tell Hal," he said, when the boy came back to the step, "that he can depend absolutely on Charlie Moore and me. I don't know whether he's counting on us. I haven't promised him anything; but he ought to know now on whom he can rely."

"That's good!" replied Chick; "I'll tell him." And he turned again and hurried away.

Manning stood for a minute in the store door gazing at the crowds in the street, and then, without going back to finish his soda, he started toward the armory.

Twenty minutes later Chick rang the door-bell at the McCormack house. Hal, himself, came to the door, and, when he saw who was there, he drew the boy into the hall, and then into the library.

"I know it's perty late for me to be comin'," began Chick apologetically; "but I got somethin' to tell you, an' it wouldn't keep over night."

"About the election, I suppose?" inquired Hal.

"Yes. Sergeant Barry says he's goin' to win out to-morrow with seven votes to spare. He told that to the bunch up to the armory to-night."

"He must be mistaken, Chick. I've figured it out, and according to my figures I'll have a majority of three."

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## THE GUARDSMAN

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"You countin' on Stone an' Hooper?"

"Yes; they're friends of mine."

"Well, they're no good. They're for Barry. I heard Fred Stone say so himself."

"If that's so I'll get left. But I've done everything that it's possible for any decent fellow to do to get elected, and I'll have no regrets on that score."

It was at this juncture that Miss Sarah Halpert entered into the conversation. She had been sitting with other members of the family in an adjoining room, the connecting door of which was wide open, and evidently she had heard Hal's remark, for now she came bustling into the library and stood facing the two boys.

"That's not so, Hal McCormack!" she declared, "and you know it. You've done precious little to get elected. Why, instead of sitting here at home to-night calmly reading Karl Marx's silly book on 'Kapital,' you ought to be out with your coat off and your sleeves rolled up, hustling for votes, as I'll warrant you Ben Barriscale is."

Hal smiled. He seldom took his Aunt Sarah's scolding seriously. But to-night she seemed to be more in earnest than usual.

"Why," she went on, "Chick is worth a dozen of you as a vote-getter. Here he's been running his legs off for you for days while you've been daw-

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dling around the house. What is the outlook anyway, Chick?"

"Perty poor, Mrs. Halpert," was the reply.

Chick always called her "Mrs." She said she didn't know why on earth he did so unless it was because he felt that even if she wasn't married she ought to be, so that she would have some one to be continually bossing.

"Well, where's your list, Hal?" she asked. "Let's look it over again. We'll separate the sheep from the goats and put bells on them. Then we'll know where they are."

She crossed over and seated herself in a chair by the table, and beckoned to the boys to join her there. They did so. And when Hal produced his list, already checked and rechecked, of the names of the enlisted men in his company, she went over it with them, name by name, and from the reports which they gave, and from her own knowledge and opinions, she drew her conclusions and made her division.

"'Fore I forget it," said Chick, "Co'poral Manning sent word to tell you that him an' Charlie Moore is for you. He thought you might not be sure of 'em."

"I wasn't sure of them," replied Hal. "It was rather a delicate matter to approach them, and I didn't do it."

"Of course you didn't!" sputtered Miss Hal-



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pert. "And there are several dozen more whom your extraordinary delicacy and modesty have prevented you from interviewing. Oh, you've made a fine campaign—for self-effacement!" She turned abruptly to Chick. "Chick," she asked, "who are the doubtful ones in this whole list? Just give me their names and I'll take them down."

"What for, Aunt Sarah?" Hal scented trouble.

"I'm going to see every mother's son of 'em tomorrow morning, and find out what's what."

"But, Aunt Sarah, you promised me ——"

She turned on him sharply.

"My promise was on condition that you should do something for yourself. And as near as I can make out you haven't done a blessed thing. Chick, give me those names."

Hal groaned in dismay. He knew, from long experience, the utter uselessness of making further protest.

"Well," replied Chick, "there's Maury an' Steinman an' Jarvis an' O'Donnell, an'—an' ——"

"How about Tom Hooper?" inquired Miss Halpert.

"Him an' Jim Stone's ag'inst us," answered Chick.

"What for?"

"No reason 't I know of, 'cept they're fixed."

"Well, they're not fixed until after I've seen them."

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"But," protested Hal, "you don't know those fellows, Aunt Sarah."

"Then," she replied quickly, "I'll make their acquaintance. Besides, I know their mothers, and I guess their mothers will have the last say. I'll try it on anyway."

"Oh, Aunt Sarah! this is not a contest between the mothers of the boys."

"All right! Make it a contest between their aunts if you like. But the time has come when I'm going to interfere. Chick, give me the rest of those names."

When her request had been complied with, Miss Halpert went over again with the two boys the entire list and checked up those who were surely for and those who were surely against the second sergeant, and divided the doubtful ones according to the probabilities; and Hal was still one vote short. Then Chick had an idea.

"Where you got Fred Lewis?" he asked.

"He's against me," replied Hal. "He works at the Barriscale, and he's one of Ben's right-hand men."

Chick sat for a moment in contemplative silence.

"I shouldn't wonder 'at I've got a pull with him," he said finally.

"You'll have to have a pretty big pull to get him away from Ben," replied Hal incredulously. "What do you mean pull, anyway?"

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"Oh, I can't tell you that. It's somethin' that him an' me knows about. It's a secret. I'm goin' to see him anyway."

He rose from his chair, cap in hand, and faced toward the door.

"Why, Chick!" exclaimed Hal, "you can't see him to-night. It's after half-past ten. He'll be in bed."

"Let the boy alone!" broke in Miss Halpert, sharply. "He knows what he's about, and you don't. It's never too late to get a vote."

So Chick went out into the night and bent his steps toward the home of Alfred Lewis, admirer of a girl by the name of Rachael. He, himself, had no clear idea of what he was going to do or how he was going to do it. He simply felt that he must find his man if possible, and settle the question of his vote. Doubtless it was too late in the evening to see him, as Sergeant McCormack had said; but at least it would do no harm to try. His way lay across the city, there was no street-car line reaching in that direction, and it was necessary for him to walk.

When he had accomplished half the distance he found himself out of breath, and sat down for a little while on the carriage block in front of a private residence to rest. When he started on again he walked more slowly. The clock in the tower of the City Hall, a mile away, tolled out the hour of eleven. He heard it and walked faster. And when

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he finally reached the Lewis home he found the house dark, and no one in the neighborhood. He leaned against the gate where he had left young Lewis the night he had given him the letter, and wondered what he should do. Plainly there was but one thing for him to do, and that was to go home. It would be absurd and unpardonable to rouse the members of the Lewis household for the purpose of his errand. He faced back toward the way by which he had come, but before he had moved from his place he heard the echo of footsteps on the pavement, and discovered a dim form approaching him. It was a man, and, as he drew near, Chick heard him whistle softly to himself. He decided to wait till the man should go by. But the man didn't go by. He stopped at the gate and looked inquiringly at the figure standing there.

"Chick!"

"Corp'al Lewis!"

The recognition was mutual and simultaneous.

"Chick, are you waiting to see me?"

"Yes, they's somethin' I kind o' want to ast you."

"All right! Go ahead and ask it. You'll never find me in a more genial frame of mind."

"Well, do you 'member 'bout that letter I found, to a girl name o' Rachael?"

"Do I remember about it! Chick, the finding of that letter has made me the happiest man on earth."

"That so?" Chick seemed to be a little incredulous.

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lous at first, but when he looked into the beaming face of the young man, as the light from the incandescent lamp at the corner fell on it, he no longer doubted his words.

"Yes, let me tell you." Young Lewis came closer and lowered his voice, although the street was quiet as an African desert, and every house in the block was closed and locked for the night. "You see, I took that letter with me when I went there this evening, and I told her about how you had found it and given it back to me; and, naturally, she wanted to see it; so, after a while, I let her read it. And that sort o' broke the ice, and—well, Chick, that girl by the name of Rachael has promised to be my wife."

He straightened up, threw back his head and shoulders, and assumed a wholly monarchical air.

"That's fine an' dandy," said Chick, not knowing what else to say.

"Yes; and let me tell you what she said, Chick. She said that if any one else had found the letter, and had shown it, and it had become public property, as it were, and people had identified me as the writer and her as the proposed recipient, she wouldn't have married me in a thousand years; just to punish me in the first place for my crass negligence, and in the second place to spite the gossips."

Chick laughed a little. "She's got some spunk, ain't she?" he said.

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"You bet she has. So you see where you come in, Chick. She's under everlasting obligations to you, and so am I."

The boy shifted his weight from one foot to the other, and reached out a caressing hand to the gate-post.

"You 'member," he asked, "what you promised me the night I give you back the letter?"

"Sure I do. I promised you I'd do you any favor in my power, any time."

"Well, you can do it now."

"How?"

"Vote for Sergeant 'Cormack to-morrow."

Fred Lewis looked questioningly into the eyes of his visitor and for a moment he did not speak. Finally he said:

"Chick, that's a poser. You know I work in the Barriscale, don't you?"

"I know it."

"And I'm looking for promotion there."

"I s'pose so."

"And Ben is counting on my vote."

"Most likely."

"Then, what can you expect?"

Chick did not answer the question, but he asked another.

"Ain't promised him nothin', have you?"

"No, he hasn't asked me. He's taken it all for granted."

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"Well, nobody'll know how anybody votes."

"That's true."

"And you ain't got nothin' ag'inst Sergeant 'Cormack?"

"No; he's a fine fellow, and he'll make a splendid officer."

"Then vote for him. I ask you."

Again young Lewis was silent. Evidently he was weighing the matter in his mind.

"Chick," he said at last, "can you keep a secret?"

"I didn't say nothin' 'bout the letter, did I?"

"No, that's right. Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I won't promise you a single thing. Mind you, not a single thing. But, Chick, Halpert McCormack is going to get one vote to-morrow that he's not expecting. Do you get me?"

"I got you."

"All right! Here's my hand on it. And, Chick, it's *our* secret."

"Criss-cross my heart," replied Chick.

There was a long hand-clasp, a cheery good-night, and the boy turned his face toward home. As he went down the hill, and struck into the deserted Main Street, the clock in the City Hall tower tolled the hour of twelve.

## CHAPTER XII

**O**N Tuesday, the fifth day of October, 1915, Major Mowbray Huntington came to Fairweather, in pursuance of the order issued to him, to hold an election for the office of first lieutenant of Company E. The election was to be held at eight o'clock in the evening of that day, in the company room at the armory. But, long before the hour for balloting had arrived, members of the company came strolling in by ones and twos and began to gather in little groups on the drill floor of the armory. There was no acrimonious debate, nor was there any exhibition of violent partisanship. The time for argument and for proselyting had gone by. But there was intense interest. It was now a question of which of the two candidates had secured the most prospective votes. Every one agreed that the contest was fairly close, but Bariscale's adherents were confident in their prediction that he would win out by a safe majority. Nor had Hal's friends given up hope. They felt that it was still among the possibilities that he should be elected. At any rate, he had made a clean, aggressive, splendid fight, and they were proud of him.



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He had never been half-hearted in the matter; not from the moment of his decision to enter the contest. At first he had been contented simply to announce his candidacy without entering into any active campaign. But when he learned what a strenuous fight his opponent was putting up, how he was leaving no stone unturned, no influence unsolicited, no argument, fair or unfair, unused; he threw himself more keenly into the contest, enlisted the active support of his friends in the company, and carried on a vigorous fight up to the very close of the campaign. And now the final chapter had been reached.

At eight o'clock the assembly was sounded, the men fell in in full uniform with side-arms, according to military law, the roll was called, the command turned over to Captain Murray, and the company marched to the large room on the second floor, where seats had been arranged in rows for purposes of the election.

At the table at one end of the room sat Major Huntington, flanked on his right by Captain Murray, and on his left by Second Lieutenant Brownell, while Corporal Manning, the company clerk, occupied a seat at one end of the table.

When the clerk had read to the company the order for the election, Major Huntington arose and said:

“In compliance with the order just read we will

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now proceed to the election of a first lieutenant for Company E. It has been certified to me that your company carries sixty-seven regularly enlisted men on its roll, all of whom are present in uniform. You therefore have nine more members than the minimum number required for holding an election. A candidate must receive at least thirty-four votes in order to be elected. I understand that there are but two known candidates for the office, and that printed ballots have been distributed containing their names. However, lest any man should be without, or should not care to use, a printed ballot, the clerk will now distribute blank slips to you, on which a candidate's name may be written. Five minutes after this distribution has been made, I shall have the company roll called, and each man, as his name is spoken, will come forward and deposit his ballot in the box on the table. I have appointed Captain Murray and Lieutenant Brownell to be inspectors of the election. After the votes have been cast they will be counted by us, and the result will be immediately announced."

There was some whispering among the men, and a few of them began to write the name of their candidate on the blank slips which had now been distributed to them. For the most part, however, the electors sat quietly with their printed ballots in their hands, awaiting the calling of the roll.

It was during this lull that Private Stone arose

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in his place. Stone was a clerk in the employ of the Barriscale Manufacturing Company, and a violent partisan of the first sergeant.

"May I ask for information?" he inquired.

"You may," replied the presiding officer.

"I want to know if, under military law, a man is eligible to election as first lieutenant over the head of a man who is now his superior officer, and who is also a candidate?"

"I know of no rule of military law," replied the chairman, "that denies his eligibility."

Friends of McCornack, who had looked up apprehensively when the question was put, breathed freely again.

"Then I want to know," continued Stone, "if it is according to military custom for an under officer to be promoted like that?"

"As a general thing," replied Major Huntington, "officers go up in accordance with their existing rank. But it is not contrary to military ethics to jump grades. The members of a company have a perfect right, if they choose to do so, to elevate a private to the captaincy over the heads of all intervening officers."

But Stone was persistent.

"Do you think," he asked, "that things like that are for 'the good of the service'? Isn't it better for military discipline that men should work their way up in regular order?"

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"That," replied the major, "is a matter that I cannot discuss with you at this time. You must settle that for yourselves, by your ballots."

Stone resumed his seat, somewhat crestfallen, amid the smiles of those who were not in sympathy with him. But no sooner was he seated than Hooper, another ardent Barriscale supporter, sprang to his feet. It was evident that Hooper was laboring under considerable excitement.

"One of the candidates here," he declared, "is known to be a socialist and a companion of radicals who are opposed to all government. He doesn't believe in the use of the military to suppress riot and disorder, nor in the punishment of any one who deliberately insults our flag. He is unpatriotic and un-American, and unsafe to be entrusted with the command of troops. Have we any right, legal or moral, to elect such a person as our first lieutenant?"

Before the last word was out of Hooper's mouth, and before the chairman could make any response, Private Moore, a warm friend of McCormack's, was on his feet.

"That's slander!" he shouted, "and Hooper knows it. There's no better soldier in the Guard, nor any more loyal citizen in this country than Sergeant Halpert McCormack; and it's contemptible of you"—turning toward Hooper with red face and eyes blazing with indignation—"I say it's con-

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temptible of you even to intimate to the contrary."

Under Moore's fierce gaze and emphatic language Hooper wilted and resumed his seat.

Then Barriscale, himself, sprang into the breach. It was apparent that his lieutenants were not standing to their guns with the force and pertinacity that he had expected of them, and that he, himself, must leap in and push the argument home. Major Huntington, the chairman, had already raised his gavel, as if to shut off further discussion, but, apparently, having permitted Moore to be heard, he thought it was not wise to silence Barriscale. So the gavel did not fall.

"It's no slander!" declared Barriscale, dramatically. "What Hooper says is all true, and he hasn't begun to tell it all either. I've investigated. I know this man's record. And I tell you that he comes little short of being a full-fledged anarchist. He would put the red flag, to-day, above the Stars and Stripes. I give notice, now, that when this thing is over, either he will be dismissed from the Guard or I will. I shall refuse to serve in the same company ——"

He got no further. The buzz which had begun at the end of his first half dozen words had risen to a prolonged hiss, and it now deepened into a perfect roar of disapproval. Men on both sides sprang to their feet clamoring to be heard.

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## THE GUARDSMAN

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It was then, for the first time, that the chairman's gavel fell; and it fell with a crash that evidenced his state of mind.

"Order!" he shouted. "I shall discipline the first man who remains on his feet or who says another word!"

Trained to obey commands, the men resumed their seats and were silent. But, on every face was a flush of excitement, apprehension or anger.

"I am astonished," continued the chairman, "that members of this company should have been guilty of such a breach of military etiquette as this, or should have indulged in such an unsoldierly demonstration. I am here to conduct your election, not to settle your quarrels. I will say, however, that if the person who receives a majority of your votes is not approved by my superior officers, he will be denied a commission. Of that you may rest assured. The clerk will now call the roll, and you will come forward and deposit your ballots as your names are spoken."

There was no more quarreling; there were no more charges or counter-charges. The time for action had come.

The clerk began calling the roll, and, as he called the several names, the men responded, advanced to the table, put their ballots into the box and resumed their seats.

When the voting had been completed the count-

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ing began. One by one the ballots were removed from the box by Lieutenant Brownell, exhibited in turn to Major Huntington and Captain Murray, and the name on them announced to Corporal Manning, the clerk, in a voice loud and distinct enough to be heard by every person present.

But the clerk was not the only one in the room who was keeping tally as the votes were counted. Fully half of the men there, with pencils and paper, were keeping their own record as the count progressed, and the other half were looking over their shoulders.

It was an absorbing occupation for all of them. The two candidates were running almost neck and neck. Now Barriscale was ahead, and now McCormack. After a few minutes the first sergeant began to forge a little farther to the front. When the fortieth ballot had been removed from the box and counted, his vote stood twenty-three to McCormack's seventeen.

Surrounded by his friends, at the right of the first row of seats, Barriscale watched with intense interest the tally as Stone carried it along in blocks of five. He had never doubted his ultimate success in the election; now, with the vote standing as it did, he was more confident than ever. He did not see how it was possible, with the lead he had, for McCormack to overtake him. Already a smile of triumph began to overspread his face.

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But the next two votes went to McCormack, and the lead was reduced to four. However, Barriscale got numbers forty-three, forty-five and forty-eight, thus holding his lead of four.

But forty-nine and fifty went to McCormack, leaving Barriscale a majority on the fiftieth count of only two.

Things began to look serious for the first sergeant.

Stone and Hooper were keeping tally with trembling fingers.

Barriscale, himself, was still optimistic concerning his success, and when the next three votes were recorded for him, carrying his lead up to five, the confident smile reasserted itself in his face, and he foresaw an easy victory.

There were only fourteen more ballots to be counted, and it was hardly within the range of possibility that he could now be defeated.

Then, alas for human probabilities! five votes in succession were announced for McCormack, so that, with the counting of the fifty-eighth ballot, the two candidates were for the first time tied.

Number fifty-nine was for Barriscale; but numbers sixty, sixty-one and sixty-two were all for McCormack, giving him a lead of two votes.

For the first time in all the strenuous campaign, the glimmer of hope in Hal's breast, alternately fading and reappearing, brightened into a steady



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flame. There were but five more votes to be counted. Surely he might reasonably hope to get two of them.

As for Sergeant Barriscale, there was no smile on his lips now. He stared at the tally sheet with incredulous eyes. The votes that he had confidently counted on had not been forthcoming. It was evident that some one, more than one indeed, had played traitor to him. Already the fires of anger were beginning to blaze up in his breast. Had he harbored resentment too soon? It might be; for the next three ballots were for him. On the sixty-fifth count he was one ahead. There were but two more ballots to be counted. Surely he had a right to expect one of these. He grasped at the proverbial straw with the clutch of a drowning man.

The excitement in the room was intense but suppressed. Save for the voice of the chairman announcing the names on the ballots, and the voice of the clerk repeating them, there was absolute stillness. No one else spoke, or even whispered. Men scarcely breathed for the suspense that was on them.

Ballot number sixty-six was removed from the box, read and recorded. It was for McCormack.

The two contestants were again tied.

There was but one more ballot to be counted. That ballot would break the tie and decide the election.

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Men put aside their tally sheets, or crumpled them in their hands, and leaned forward in their chairs, their eyes fixed on the lips of the presiding officer, in breathless anticipation.

Brownell reached into the box, drew out the last ballot, glanced at it, and handed it to Major Huntington.

The major looked at it in his turn, showed it to Captain Murray, and then announced the name written on it.

“Halpert McCormack.”

For the fraction of a minute there was dead silence. Then, like a clap of thunder, there came a swift outburst of applause. Hands, feet, throats united to acclaim the young officer-elect. Spontaneous, irrepressible, enthusiastic, the chorus of rejoicing rolled out from the company room, down the broad stairway, and across the wide drill-hall to its remotest corner. People waiting there in scores to hear the outcome of the election caught up the waves of sound and sent them echoing back to the room on the upper floor, though not one of them knew as yet whose victory it was.

Then, for the second time that evening, the chairman's gavel crashed down on the table before him, but on his face there was no sign of annoyance or of disapproval as he announced the result of the balloting.

“Sixty-seven votes have been cast. Of these

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Sergeant Barriscale receives thirty-three, and Sergeant McCormack receives thirty-four. Second Sergeant Halpert McCormack has therefore been elected to the office of First Lieutenant of Company E. He will report to me for instructions immediately after the breaking of ranks. Captain Murray, you will now dismiss your company."

Of course Hal was the hero of the hour. Of course people congratulated him right and left. If his head had been easily turned he would have faced backward forever after. Brownell was jubilant. Major-General Chick was delirious with joy. Aunt Sarah, waiting with her ear at the telephone receiver for word from the armory, could hardly contain herself when the victory was announced to her. When Hal went to see her the next day she saw him coming, met him on the porch, and kissed him on both cheeks in full view of the passers-by, greatly to his discomfiture.

But he partly consoled himself by saying to her:

"The men whom you especially interviewed in my behalf all voted against me. The next time I run for anything I'm going to lock you into the house and throw the key down the well. It's not safe to have you at large on such an occasion."

"You behave yourself!" she retorted, "and stop making fun of a defenseless old maid. Do you know what I'm going to do to punish you? I'm going to make you a gift of your officer's uniform,

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and sword, and shoulder-straps, and the whole equipment, and ——”

“Aunt Sarah, you mustn’t think ——”

“You—keep—your mouth—closed. I ——”

“But, Aunt Sarah!”

“I say shut up! The thing’s settled. How’s your mother to-day?”

If McCormack’s friends were jubilant over his election, he, himself, did not appear to be unduly elated. He did not seem to feel that his victory was a thing of which he should be especially proud. He had been elected by a bare majority of the votes of all the electors of the company, and he had won out over his opponent by only a single vote.

Nor had he been greatly ambitious to obtain the promotion. Indeed, had it not been for Barriscale’s surly conduct and attempted bribe, he would have persisted in refusing to be a candidate. But, now that he had been elected, he determined that he would fulfil the duties of his new position faithfully, to the best of his judgment and ability.

He was not objectionable to the bulk of the minority voters of the company. If he did not know that at the time of the election he learned it soon afterward. One by one, as opportunity offered, they came to him, congratulated him, and gave him sincere assurances of their entire loyalty. His opponent had, indeed, been their choice, either for reasons of preference or policy, but McCormack

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was in no sense displeasing to them. This, much to his satisfaction, they made him understand.

So, in due course, the return of the election was forwarded through regimental headquarters to the Adjutant-General, the several headquarters through which it passed endorsing thereon their approval. It was as follows:

*"To the Adjutant-General of Pennsylvania:*

SIR:

At an election held on the fifth day of October, A.D. 1915, for First Lieutenant of Company E, —th Infantry, N. G. P., the following named person was duly elected, to wit: HALPERT McCORMACK of Benson County; and I hereby certify that the company now bears upon its rolls the names of sixty-seven bona-fide enlisted men, that at this election sixty-seven men were paraded in State uniform, that the candidate elected received thirty-four votes, and that he has been duly notified by me of his election. Witness my hand this seventh day of October, A. D. 1915.

MOWBRAY HUNTINGTON,

"Attest,

RICHARD L. MANNING,

*Clerk of Election."*

*Major,*

*Conducting Election."*

This return was accompanied by McCormack's acceptance as follows:

*"To the Adjutant-General,*

*State of Pennsylvania:*

*Through Intermediate Headquarters.*

SIR:

I have the honor to advise you that I hereby accept

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the election to the office of First Lieutenant of Company E,  
—th Regiment Infantry, N. G. P.

Very respectfully,

HALPERT McCORMACK,  
*Second Sergeant Company E.*  
Fairweather, Pa."

But there was no positive assurance that Hal would receive his commission. He still had Ben Barriscale to deal with, and Barriscale had threatened to force him out of the Guard. The first step in such a movement would of course be to attempt to block the confirmation of McCormack's election before the military board authorized by law to deny a commission to elected but unapproved officers.

That the defeated candidate would not hesitate to take action of this kind, if he could be assured of any fair prospect of success, every one knew.

He was disappointed, angry, and bitter beyond belief over his defeat. He felt that he had been betrayed by some of those whose support he had a right to receive; that, as he said, they had given him "the double cross," and that it was their defection that had led to his defeat. He did not know, or perhaps could not have understood if he had known, that it was his own injudicious and threatening outburst on the day of election that caused the changing of enough ballots to precipitate the disaster to his cause.

And he did not know, and was destined never to



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## THE GUARDSMAN

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know, about the midnight visit of Chick Dalloway with Fred Lewis, nor why it was that McCormack carried the election by a majority of just one vote.

Of course much of his anger and resentment were directed toward his late opponent. His threat on the night of the election had been no idle one, and Hal and his friends knew it. They waited, therefore, not without some apprehension, to see what steps he might now take to prevent the first lieutenant-elect from ever having the benefit of his shoulder-straps.

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## CHAPTER XIII

**I**T is true that First Sergeant Barriscale took into serious consideration the question of an attempt to block the confirmation of his rival's election to the first lieutenancy.

But when he consulted with his father about the matter, the elder Barriscale advised against such action. Not that he had any love for McCormack. He was against him as bitterly as was his son. But he had a longer head than had his boy, and he felt that the time was not yet ripe in which to inaugurate a movement that would do the young officer the most injury. Hal had not renounced his socialistic leanings, nor had he forsaken his radical associates. Of that fact the Barriscales had assured themselves, and with that fact, and what it promised for the future, they were at present content.

"Give him rope enough, and he'll hang himself," was the sententious comment of the elder Barriscale.

So, in due time, Lieutenant McCormack received his commission and took the oath required of commissioned officers. It was an oath the obligation of



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which stared him in the face many times in the days that were to come.

"I do solemnly swear that to the best of my knowledge and ability I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States, and of the State of Pennsylvania, against all enemies foreign and domestic; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

HALPERT McCORMACK,  
*First Lieutenant Company E,*  
*—th Regiment, N. G. P.,*  
*Fairweather, Pa."*

"Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 21st day of October, A. D. 1915.

ELON A. CONYBEARE,  
*Major, Staff of BRIG.-GEN'L. SAM'L. A. FINLETTER."*

So, at last, Hal had his shoulder-straps, his officer's uniform, and his equipment. Much against his inclination he had been obliged to accept these things as a gift from his Aunt Sarah Halpert. Not to have done so would, as she herself declared, have completely broken her heart.

"I can't go and fight," she said to him; "not but what I'd be perfectly willing to, but they wouldn't let me. So the next best thing for me to do was to furnish you with your fighting togs. And you'll have a chance to use 'em; take my word for it. Uncle Sam's soldiers are going to have some fighting to do before things get settled."

"I hope not, Aunt Sarah."



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"You hope not! Why, you weak-kneed pacifist! If this government doesn't jump in and help France and England smash the Kaiser, I'll be ashamed of my flag."

"It's not our quarrel."

"Of course it's our quarrel. Those stupid German blunderers have made it our quarrel. They've trodden on Uncle Sam's coat-tails once a week for a year. They'll do it about twice more and then something will drop. Besides, there's all that hubbub down in Mexico, making life a nightmare this side the border. Those hoodlums have got to be clubbed into decency, and I don't see but what you fellows have got to go down there and do it. There isn't enough of the regular army to patrol a greaser's cabin. And if you don't get a taste of war across the seas or down among the cactus, you may have a chance to show your mettle right here at home. They say the workmen in the mills are getting impudent and ugly and threatening a strike that'll make Ben Barriscale's hair stand on end. I mean the old man."

She paused, not because she had no more to say, but in order to take fresh breath. The pause gave Hal another chance to break in.

"I wouldn't mind helping to defend this country against a foreign foe, if it were necessary," he said, "or even assisting to suppress a domestic rebellion against the lawfully organized government."

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But when it comes to doing strike duty I protest. That's a job for the state police anyway; not for the National Guard."

"But it *is* a job for the National Guard when it gets too big for the police or the state police to handle. I suppose men have a right to quit work whenever they want to; but they haven't a right to try to win a strike with brickbats and torches."

"If workmen were fairly treated, and given their due proportion of the product of their labor, there would be no strikes, and no brickbats, and no torches. Anyway, the idea of workers being awed or shot or bayoneted by the militia into submission to their capitalist employers' terms, is so abhorrent to me that I don't want to think of it."

"There you go again, you wild-eyed anarchist! A fine militiaman you are! Threatening to compound felonies and protect criminals! You'd better ——"

"There, now, Aunt Sarah, let's call quits! We'll never agree in the world. You come up to the armory to-morrow night and see me in my new uniform, and forget that I'm a bomb-throwing, king-killing anarchist."

It was true, as Aunt Sarah had said, that there was uneasiness among the workmen employed in the Barriscale plant. The factory had never before been so busy. The company was not engaged directly in the manufacture of munitions for use by

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the entente allies, but it was engaged in the manufacture of implements and machinery for the making of such munitions. Among the men the rumor was current that the profits of the concern were enormous, and that the Barriscales and their associates were reaping great harvests of gold. They knew of no reason why they, in view of the sharp advance in the general cost of living, should not share in this prosperity. Wages had indeed been advanced twice since the advent of the European War, but these advances were merely a pittance in comparison to what they were entitled to receive if stories of the company's profits were true.

However, the winter came and brought no strike. Men are not apt, in severe weather, to look complacently on disappearing jobs.

But when the late March days gave promise of an early spring, and new life began to stir the pulses of men as it stirred the heart of nature, the spirit of discontent awoke and crystallized into a demand on the officers of the Barriscale Company for much higher wages, shorter hours and better conditions of labor. The demand was refused. Next in order was an ultimatum to the effect that unless, by the following Tuesday night, the requirements of the men were substantially complied with, not a union man would be found at his post on Wednesday morning.

Benjamin Barriscale, Sr., shut his square jaws

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together, and told his board of directors that so far as he was concerned he would scrap the entire plant and go out of business before he would be black-jacked into submission to a lot of irresponsible union officials. And since he dominated the board and no one cared to dispute his judgment, the ultimatum was ignored and the strike was declared.

Both sides claimed to be confident of victory, and, as the contest lengthened, there was less talk of compromise, and the farther away appeared to be the day of settlement.

In the fifth week of the struggle a new element entered into the situation. Hitherto the management of the strike had been in the hands of labor union officials. They had held their men well in check, there had been little disorder and no rioting. But, from the inception of the trouble, organizers and leaders of the radical wing of the workers had labored among the idle men, quietly, insidiously, persistently, successfully. Now, having gained a firm foothold, they assumed management of the strike, and dictated to the company their own terms for reëmployment regardless of the demands made by union officials. Not only at the Barriscale works, but throughout the city, they made proselytes, and trouble. The discontented, the unthinking, the reckless, the foreign-born and unnaturalized, gathered under their leadership. Their logic was convincing, their philosophy alluring, their

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promises glittering; indeed, if they were to be believed, the day of labor's redemption in Fairweather was at hand. The workers had only to persist in their demands and to block all resumption of work by any one until those demands were met, and victory was sure to rest on their banners.

Into this new, more aggressive, more bitter campaign, Hugo Donatello plunged with all of his accustomed vigor and enthusiasm. He believed in his cause. He did not see the ugly side of his propaganda. He was not at heart a criminal, he was a dreamer. And he dreamed that if the principle of the solidarity of labor, the international brotherhood of all who toiled, the distribution of all wealth to those who earned it by their toil, could once be established in this inland city of America, the benefit and glory of it would spread from this as a center, across the continent, across the ocean to bring peace to war-torn Europe; and the name of Hugo Donatello as chief propagandist of the new-old philosophy would be acclaimed throughout the civilized world.

He had not yet made a complete convert of Halpert McCormack. For while the young lieutenant sympathized deeply with his humanitarian motives, and, in a general way, with his philosophy of economics, he was not yet ready to approve of the methods by which the economic millennium was to be ushered in. Complete disarmament, confisca-

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tion of private property, abolition of restraining laws, sabotage and violence, these things were not to Hal's liking; in his view the end did not quite justify the means. But, under the eloquence of Donatello's logic, under the power of his persuasion, under the magic force of his enthusiasm, this young dreamer and reformer was drifting ever and ever nearer to the rocks and shoals of that radicalism upon which, if finally and completely stranded, he was sure to be wrecked.

It goes without saying that Donatello's weekly Journal, *The Disinherited*, took up the cause of the more radical element among the striking workmen with vigor and enthusiasm. The attitude of the Barriscale corporation, and other manufacturers whose workmen were out, was characterized as selfish, obstinate and cruel. One issue of the paper, published some weeks after the inauguration of the strike, contained an editorial a portion of which ran as follows:

“Still the situation does not change. Still is justice denied to those men by whose labors these very purse-proud owners of the mills have become so rich. Now they say that strike-breakers will be coming to take the places of those honest workingmen, and that state soldiery will protect these scabs, and that the military company of Fairweather will be marched to the mills and ordered by the capitalist employers to turn the points of their bayonets

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against the hearts of laborers looking for their own. But all of those members of the military company do not have sympathy with these plutocrats and hired thugs. What then will be? Will honest and free soldiers obey orders to shoot down fellow-toilers, those neighbors and friends? Is it for this the military is? Then what young man of spirit, of heart-kindness, would join himself with that militia, and become the tool of the capitalist class, and forced to obey their orders, even to the shedding of the blood of fellow-workers?"

On the evening of the day on which the paper containing this article made its appearance, General Chick entered the drill-hall at the armory to find a group of militiamen reading, and discussing with some heat, the editorial in *The Disinherited*.

As the boy approached the crowd, one of the fun-loving members of it called out to him:

"Here's a drive at you, Chick. Donatello says that no honest man will try to join Company E. Where's that paper? Let Chick read it for himself."

The paper was thrust into Chick's hands and the article pointed out to him. He took it to the nearest electric sidelight, and slowly, and not without some difficulty, read it through.

When he returned to the group the young fellow who had spoken to him said:

"Well, what do you think of it?"

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"I think," replied the boy, "that he's way off. I got no use for them dogs in the manger, anyway."

The humorous soldier turned to his companions. "There's no doubt," he said, "but that Donatello had General Chick in mind when he wrote that article. He doesn't want Chick to join Company E, and he's trying to bluff him out in advance by assailing his honor and aspersing his motives. Chick, old boy, I wouldn't stand for it if I were you."

Chick never quite knew, when the boys talked to him, whether he was being addressed in jest or in earnest; and he didn't know on this occasion. But he had usually found it safe to assume that those who gave him information or advice were treating him seriously and he proceeded now on that assumption.

"It don't make no difference to me what he says," replied Chick. "He can't scare me out. When I git a chance to jine, I'll jine."

"That's right! and I'd tell him so. I'd put it up to him squarely that his threats and warnings fall off of you like water off of a duck's back."

"Oh, maybe I'll see him some time an' have it out with him."

"Good! But I wouldn't wait. 'Strike while the iron's hot,' I say. I'd tackle him to-morrow about it if I were you."

But Chick was already shuffling away toward the



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stack-room and did not reply. The thing stayed on his mind, however, and the more he thought of it the more indignant he became. He was not satisfied that Donatello had had him in mind while writing the editorial. Probably that idea originated in the minds of the boys; it was not material anyway.

The serious part of it was that, through his newspaper, Donatello had been making an effort to prevent young men generally from joining the National Guard; and that, in Chick's estimation, was an offense which fell little short of actual treason. He wondered if Donatello did not know that it was the duty of every young man who was able to do so, to become a soldier of the State; that it was a patriotic privilege; that some of the very finest young men in town were members of Company E. If he didn't know it, some one ought to tell him. And perhaps no one was better fitted for the task of telling him than was General Chick, himself. Perhaps from no one else in the city could the information so appropriately come.

Many times that night Chick thought about it, and when morning came he had finally decided to call upon the editor of *The Disinherited* and enlighten his mind upon this important subject. It was toward noon, however, before, having finished the performance of the various tasks which usually occupied his mornings, he found time to make the

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visit he had determined upon. When he mounted the rickety stairs and entered the one large room which was used alike for press-room, mailing-room and office, he found Donatello there alone, sitting at a case and setting type. The man recognized him at once and called him by his name. It was not the first time they had met each other. Chick looked around him with some curiosity. He had never before been in a press-room. This one was doubtless the humblest of its type, but newspapers were printed here, and that fact in itself made the place important.

Donatello paused in his work and looked at his visitor inquiringly.

"I ain't never be'n in a printin' shop before," said Chick, "and I kind o' wanted to see what it looked like."

"Well," replied the man, "it is not so much on the looks. But here it is from which great ideas have gone forth in print."

"Do you write 'em all?" asked the boy abruptly.

Donatello laughed a little. "I do not write all that which appears in my paper," he replied. "But the editorial; yes, that I write."

Chick drew from his pocket a copy of *The Disinherited* and pointed to the article which had disturbed him.

"Did you write that?" he demanded.

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The editor laughed again. "Yes, that have I written. Do you like it? No?"

"No," replied the boy. "I don't like it. That's what I've come for; to tell you I don't like it. Them fellows ain't no tools of nobody. They're jest soldiers. They obey orders. If them strikers don't want to get hurt, let 'em behave themselves. That's all they is to it."

Donatello swung himself around on his stool and stared at General Chick in amazement. Then his look of surprise gave way to one of amusement. He clasped his hands over his knee and smiled.

"You champion the cause of militarism?" he asked.

"I don't know what that is," replied the boy. "But I b'lieve in the National Guard, and I b'lieve in Company E, and I expect to jine it myself the first chance I git."

"So! you would also the soldier be?"

"Sure I'd be a soldier. Why, the best fellows in town belong to Company E. Don't you know that?"

"Some good fellows which I know, they belong; that's true. And when it is that you also have belonged, there will be yet one more. Your first lieutenant, him, in all the city there is no choicer man. Brains he has. Heart he has. Wisdom he has. What else would you?"

Donatello flung his hands into the air, as though

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the last word had been said in the way of encomium, slid down from his stool, went over and sat in a chair by a littered table, and motioned to Chick to occupy another chair near by which long ago had lost all semblance of a back.

"Now you've said somethin'," replied Chick, seating himself. "Ain't no finer young man in Fairweather 'n what Lieutenant 'Cormack is. Him an' me's been friends sence the first day he come into the comp'ny."

"And he and I, we have been friends since the first day we have met with each other. Ha! Since we have the mutual friend, you and I, we also should be friends. Is it not so?"

If Chick had ever felt any real animosity toward the editor of *The Disinherited* he found himself now suddenly bereft of it. He could not look into the frank, friendly eyes of this young man, or note his winning smile, and harbor any grievance against him.

"Sure!" he said; "I ain't got nothin' ag'inst you, 'cept what you put in the paper 'bout the Guard, and I guess you know now that you was on the wrong track, don't you?"

Donatello 'did not answer the question. A new thought seemed to have come to him.

"Where is it that you work?" he asked.

"Oh," replied the boy, "I do odd chores around mornin's. I ain't got no stiddy, all-day job."

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"How would you like it; an all-day job?"

"Doin' what?"

"Working here with me."

"Printin' the paper?"

"Yes. Running the press. Washing the type. Sweeping the room. Going on the errand, peddling the paper. Oh, a what you call the general utility man. A man of all the work."

Chick threw a comprehensive glance around the room, as if to take in the situation.

"You want a man?" he asked.

"Yes."

"How much you want to pay?"

"For the all-day job?"

"No, for half a day. I got customers I can't give up mornin's."

"Well, let me see! I pay you forty cents for the half day."

"Tain't enough," replied Chick promptly.

"Fifty cents."

"That's more like it; but you'll have to stretch it a little further."

"Fifty-five. I will not pay more."

"All right! I'm your huckleberry."

Chick's eyes snapped, and a flush came into his cheeks. Here was a steady job facing him on his own terms. He did not doubt his ability to handle it. He felt that the employment would be congenial. He accepted the place without question.

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There was more discussion concerning the nature of the duties which the new employee was to perform, his hours of labor, and the day on which he should begin work. But these matters were easily settled, and when Chick rose to go the bargain was complete. He felt now that he had taken his proper place in the army of workers. He had what he had long wanted, a regular job. Moreover, the nature of his task, that of assisting in the preparation and publication of a weekly journal, was such as to justify him in assuming an air of importance commensurate with the character of his duties.

When he reached the head of the stairs on his way out a thought came to him and he turned back.

"I want it understood," he said to Donatello, "that, so long as I'm helpin' to git out this paper, they mustn't be no jumpin' on the National Guard, nor on Company E. I won't stand for it."

"And if it should be so that there is?" Donatello's voice was smooth and musical.

"I'll resign my position," declared Chick.

"Very well! That bridge we will cross when we have reached it."

The next day General Chick was added to the working staff of *The Disinherited*.

On a day late in April, Hal received a note from Donatello asking him to call that evening at the printing-room of *The Disinherited*. It was not an

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unusual request, nor was it the first time that Hal had visited the quarters of the social radical.

At the street door he found General Chick who was looking up and down the walk and apparently waiting for him. Chick had been for some months now in Donatello's employ. He did miscellaneous work about the place, went on errands, washed type, delivered papers, put his hands to almost every task that a boy with a lop-shoulder and a crooked back could be expected to do. He was not overworked. Donatello treated him kindly, paid him living wages, and made a friend of him. All in all it was the best job Chick had ever had.

When he let McCormack in he closed and locked the street door before going with him down the dimly lighted hall to the printing-room. It was in this room that Hal found, in Donatello's company, two men whom he knew by sight, but whom he had not before personally met. One of them was distinctly a foreigner; big, muscular, shrewd-eyed, with black hair hanging to his shoulders, and a large, loose, black tie floating from his throat down onto his breast. He was introduced simply as Gabriel. The other man, so far as appearance and accent went, was a well-to-do American. His name was given as Kranich. Donatello explained that they had come in from a neighboring city to assist the local leaders in bringing the strike to a successful conclusion. They wanted to know from Lieutenant



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McCormack what the attitude of the soldiers of the National Guard would be in the event of their being called out on strike duty. More specifically they wanted to know what the attitude of Lieutenant McCormack himself would be, in the not impossible event of his being in command of Company E on such an occasion.

Donatello interrupted the conversation at this point by asking Chick to go and lock the door leading into the hall. This was an important conference, he said, and it was not worth while to run the risk of interruption.

So Chick locked the door, and came back and sat down on a wobbly stool, by a dilapidated case, and listened, wide-eyed and open-mouthed, to the discussion.

"You know it is our theory," explained Kranich, "that the workmen are as much owners of their jobs as the employers are owners of their plants; and that they have as much right to prevent other men from taking those jobs away from them as the mill owners would have to prevent other capitalists from seizing their mills by force. What we want to know is, in case of an attempt by our men to resume their jobs, or to prevent other men from appropriating them, what your personal attitude would be if you were called out, as an officer of the National Guard, to prevent disorder. Would your guns be pointed toward us or toward our enemies?"



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"I would," replied Hal, "obey the orders of my superior officer."

"Suppose you, yourself, were in command of the company?"

"I would do my duty as a Guardsman."

"Exactly! And what would be your duty? to protect honest workmen in their efforts to obtain possession of the tools of their employment, or to bayonet and shoot us at the behest of capitalists and scabs?"

Before Hal could reply Donatello interrupted. He feared that McCormack might be antagonized by such blunt and embarrassing questions. He knew, from long experience, that persuasion, not bluff, was the weapon with which to fight the prejudices of the young Guardsman.

"You do not need so closely to question him!" he exclaimed. "I know him. He is safe. He believes in the solidarity of labor the world over. His sympathies, they are with our men in this struggle for the human rights. Is it not so, Lieutenant?"

"It is decidedly so," replied Hal.

"And he will that way interpret his duty as officer to do least injury to us, his brothers. Is it not so, Lieutenant?"

"That is correct," replied Hal. "I do not intend to fail in the performance of my duty in any quarter."

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Donatello turned toward his guests with a wide sweep of his hands.

"Gentlemen," he said, "with that we must be content."

But it was an hour later, after much discussion of economic problems, and the methods by which they were to be solved, that Chick unlocked the door and let Lieutenant McCormack out into the street. And neither of them saw the figure of a man patiently waiting in a dark recess two doors away, a man who had seen all of Donatello's guests arrive, and who was waiting to see them all depart.

Later on, as Hal thought over his visit to the printing shop, he felt that he had said nothing that he did not fully believe, that he had made no promise either of action or inaction that he did not stand ready to fulfil. It was very true that his sympathies were with the working class of men. He seconded all their efforts for their own betterment. He felt that some day labor, united, harmonious, acting in concert, under one leadership the world over, would move its enormous body, would rise, tremble, stretch itself like some great giant, and in the process would upheave society; and that out of the tumult and confusion and wreckage would arise a new social order in which every man would be the equal of every other man in all things material and immaterial with which a beneficent Creator had



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endowed them. It was a dream, perhaps. Donatello had dreamed it. His two visitors had dreamed it. A hundred thousand men with toil-hardened hands, under the shadow of the Stars and Stripes, had dreamed it. Countless millions in the old world, under the iron heel of autocracy, had died dreaming it. Yet, some day, notwithstanding the natural perverseness of the human heart, the dream was bound to come true. So the dreamers believed; so they taught, and to that end they struggled and fought.

But the question of immediate moment to Halpert McCormack, a question that pressed ever more and more persistently into his heart and conscience, was, whether he, with opinions and beliefs so radically at variance with those of the governing class of his country, had a moral right to belong to, much less to be an officer in, the National Guard. And the more he pondered upon this question, the more imperative it seemed to him to be that he should put an end to a situation so anomalous, a situation which in certain contingencies that might at any moment arise, would become awkward, acute and impossible. His military connection was the only link that still held him to the world of conservatism; he might as well snap it and be entirely free.

So, without consultation with any one, for he had no friend with whom he felt that it would be profit-

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able for him to consult, he prepared for the final step.

He entered the office of Captain Murray on an afternoon preceding the weekly drill, and asked for a private interview. His request was granted. The captain looked worried and apprehensive.

"I have been expecting you to come," he said. "If you hadn't done so I should have sent for you. But I'll hear your errand first. What is it?"

"It is nothing of great importance," replied Hal. "I simply want to show you this paper which I have decided to send to-day to Colonel Wagstaff."

Captain Murray took the paper, unfolded it slowly, and read it aloud:

*"To the Adjutant General of Pennsylvania:  
(Through Intermediate Headquarters)*

"Now holding the office of First Lieutenant in Company E, of the —th Infantry, Third Brigade, of the National Guard of Pennsylvania, in consequence of holding certain economic views and opinions inconsistent with such position, I hereby tender my resignation of said office, and request an honorable discharge therefrom.

"I am not under arrest, nor returned to court martial, nor the subject of any charges for any deficiency or delinquency, and I am ready to deliver over or account for all monies, books or other property of the State in my possession, and for which I am accountable, to the officer authorized by law to receive the same, and my accounts for money or public property are correct, and I am not indebted to the State.

*"HALPERT McCORMACK,  
First Lieutenant."*

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Captain Murray finished reading the paper and looked up wearily and anxiously at Hal.

"I have been expecting this," he said. "I am not greatly surprised. But—it comes too late."

"Why too late, Captain?"

"Because charges have already been filed against you, and a court martial demanded. I suppose you would not want to retire under fire even though you should be permitted to do so."

"I don't know. It would depend on the nature of the charges. May I see a copy of the complaint?"

"Certainly!"

Captain Murray turned to his desk, drew a long envelope from a pigeonhole, removed a formal-looking document therefrom, and handed the document to Lieutenant McCormack to read.

## CHAPTER XIV.

**T**HE document which Captain Murray handed to McCormack to read comprised the charges and specifications that had been filed against the first lieutenant. It had apparently been drawn with much skill and care, and it read as follows:

“TO CAPTAIN ROBERT J. MURRAY,  
*Commanding Company E, —th Regiment Infantry*  
*N. G. P.*

“SIR:

“The undersigned citizens of Fairweather in the county of Benson beg leave to file with you the following charges and specifications against First Lieutenant Halpert McCormack of your company, and request you to formulate said charges and specifications, and, through intermediate headquarters, present them to the proper military authority, and request a hearing upon them by court martial.

“CHARGE I. Using contemptuous and disrespectful words against the President and the Congress of the United States, in violation of the 19th Article of War.

“*Specification.* In that the said First Lieutenant Halpert McCormack, did on or about the 20th day of April, 1916, declare publicly, in the presence and hearing of numerous persons, that the President and the Congress of the United States were but the tools of organized wealth, and deserved neither the respect nor obedience of honest and right-thinking men.

“CHARGE II. ‘Conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman,’ in violation of the 61st and 62nd Articles of War.

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*"Specification 1.* In that the said First Lieutenant Halpert McCormack, by principle, declaration and practice, is a socialist, a syndicalist, an anarchist, and a sympathizer with and believer in the principles and methods of an organization known as 'The Industrial Workers of the World,' which organization is inimical to law, order and public safety.

*"Specification 2.* In that the said First Lieutenant Halpert McCormack has declared himself opposed to the suppression of mobs and riots by military force.

*"Specification 3.* In that the said First Lieutenant Halpert McCormack has declared that the rights of property are not sacred as against the efforts of wage-earners who desire to take possession of such property by force.

*"Specification 4.* In that the said First Lieutenant Halpert McCormack has declared that his loyalty to the red flag of anarchism takes precedence of his loyalty to the Stars and Stripes.

"In further explanation of Charge II and the specifications thereunder, the undersigned desire to add that they represent the ownership of certain manufacturing plants in this community, from which many of the workmen have voluntarily withdrawn on strike; that many of such workmen, together with a large number of irresponsible and disorderly persons, urged on and inflamed by anarchistic leaders, have threatened to take possession of these plants by force, or to damage or destroy them, and it may be necessary for the owners to call on the militia of the State for the protection of their property and the safeguarding of the lives of their loyal employees.

*"Signed,*

THE BARRISCALE MANUFACTURING CO.,  
by Benj. Barriscale, Sr., *President.*

THE FAIRWEATHER MACHINE CO.,  
by Don. G. Albertson, *President.*

THE BENSON COUNTY IRON WORKS,  
by Rufus Ingersoll, *Vice-President."*

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Lieutenant McCormack looked up from the reading of the charges with eyes that were dazed and incredulous.

"Well," said Captain Murray, "what do you think of it?"

"Why," replied Hal, "it's not true; not any of it."

"Probably not," replied the captain, "but you'll have to meet it all the same. I've got to forward the complaint to headquarters. I've no discretion in the matter."

"I suppose that's true."

Hal was still staring almost stupidly at his commander. The sweeping nature of the charges, their bluntness and brutality, had given him a shock from which he did not at once recover. For years he had been inviting just such a calamity as this, but now that it had come, in this direct and drastic form, the suddenness of it had quite taken away his breath.

Captain Murray handed Hal's resignation back to him.

"You won't want to file this now," he said.

"No," replied Hal, taking it, "I guess not. I think—I think I'll deny those charges."

"Of course you will. And let me tell you, you've got a very pretty fight on your hands. It'll be no boy's play. The Barriscales are determined. You know you've got yourself into this predicament



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by flirting with economic vagaries, and associating with radical charlatans. I'm willing to do what I can to help you out provided you'll put up a vigorous defense on your own account. I want to keep you in the Guard."

"Thank you, Captain! What would you suggest?"

"I think you'd better go and get Brownell to take up your case, and defend you. He's a good lawyer and a good friend of yours. If anybody can save you he can."

"Very well, I'll speak to him. In the meantime I suppose I may be considered as being under arrest?"

"No; I've thought about that. These charges are still in the nature of a complaint from private citizens. They will not become official until I have acted on them. But I feel that I cannot afford to ignore them. The Army Regulations provide that the commanding officer with whom any charges are filed shall state, in forwarding them, whether the charges can be sustained. I cannot say that these charges will not be sustained, but I can and will say that I do not think the filing of them warrants your immediate arrest. You will therefore continue to perform your usual duties until the court itself shall order otherwise."

"Thank you, Captain Murray! You are very generous."

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“And, McCormack, if you get out of this thing safely—and let me tell you frankly that the chances are against you, for you’ve been skating on mighty thin ice,—but if you should pull through all right, for heaven’s sake let go of all these visionary schemes! Come back to solid earth, and be a plain American citizen along with the rest of us!”

Hal did go to see Brownell. And although Brownell gave him a severe dressing-down for what he termed his crass foolishness, he agreed, nevertheless, to take up his case, and he did so with vigor and avidity, for he was fond of the first lieutenant and would have gone through fire and water for him. But when it came to the actual preparation for the defense Hal could give his counsel little assistance. The accused man knew of no specific circumstances on which the charges could have been based, nor of any witnesses whom he could call to disprove them. And while he was obliged to admit that he had undoubtedly said things that might give color to the complaint, he was nevertheless certain that the specifications as they were drawn were untrue.

So Brownell, with a listless client and a weak case before him, had a man’s task on hand to make up a defense. But he plunged into the work bravely. He cross-examined and badgered McCormack by the hour. He interviewed Donatello, General Chick, Miss Halpert, any one and every

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one who might by any possibility be able to throw light on the situation. He studied the law of the matter and exhausted the logic of his fertile mind in the preparation of arguments and briefs. And after he had done everything that legal knowledge and human ingenuity could help him to do to make ready his defense, he admitted confidentially to Captain Murray that the case was hopeless, and, incidentally, he brought down severe maledictions on the head of the first lieutenant, who, by his ridiculous vagaries and indiscretions, had wrought his own destruction.

One day General Chick came to Brownell's office with flushed face and staring eyes.

"They've put me through the third degree," he said.

"What do you mean?" asked Brownell; "talk!"

"Why, they suspœnaed me into Jim Hooper's place an' made me tell everything Lieutenant 'Cormack said that night he met them strike leaders in Donatello's shop."

"For the love of Pete! I didn't know he met them."

"Sure he met 'em. I was there."

"What did you say he told them?"

"Why, now, I said he told 'em he believed them men o' Barriscale's had a right to their jobs, and if Barriscale didn't give 'em back to 'em they had a right to take 'em anyway."

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"Yes; go on!"

Brownell was gripping the arms of his chair in grim despair.

"An' he said—he said 'at he wouldn't never give no orders to no soldiers to shoot workin' men tryin' to git their places back."

"Oh, gosh!" The second lieutenant released his grips on the arms of the chair and clasped his head with both his hands. "The jig's up!" he continued. "You've done it, Chick!"

"Done what, Mr. Brownell?"

"Given the enemy enough ammunition to blow Lieutenant McCormack into the middle of next week."

"Will—will what I told 'em hurt 'im?"

"Hurt him! Thunder and Mars! It'll send him to a military prison for life."

Stunned, dazed, almost unseeing, Chick stumbled out of Brownell's office into the street. Had the lieutenant for one minute realized what a staggering blow he had given to the boy, he would have dropped everything and hurried after him and disabused his simple mind of its belief in the enormity of his offense. As it was, the wretched hunchback, with an awful, self-accusing finger, piercing into his very vitals, hot and ice-cold by turns, slunk back to hide himself in his dingy corner in the printing-shop of Donatello. For if there was one thing on earth that he would have lost his right hand rather than

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to have done, it was a thing that might in any way have been injurious to Halpert McCormack. And if there was one person on earth for whom he would willingly have laid down his life and thought it a joy to do so, that person was his beloved first lieutenant.

The strike at the Barriscale plant, and at other smaller plants throughout the city, dragged on through the spring, unsettled and unbroken. But in May, just before starvation on the one side and insolvency on the other became an acute possibility, the union men, through an intermediate committee of interested citizens, came to terms with the companies.

The employers on the one hand made certain concessions, the employees on the other hand waived certain demands, and a settlement was reached.

But the leaders of the radicals would have none of it. Their men would not go back, they declared, until every original demand had been fully met, nor would they permit the union employees to resume work without them. Moreover, when they did return it would not be as wage-slaves, under a humiliating agreement, but as proprietors, having at least an equal voice with their former employers in the management of the business and the distribution of its profits. For was it not one of the chief tenets of their organization that:

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“There is but one bargain which industrial workers will make with the employing class, complete surrender of all control of industry to the Organized Workers.”

So the companies were ground between the upper millstone of unionism and the nether millstone of syndicalism. But, when the shops were opened, the union men, under the protection of the police, disregarding the threats of their former companions in idleness, went back to work. The effort to prevent them by force from doing so was unsuccessful. There were some broken heads and bruised bodies, and the Industrialists retired from the conflict defeated, but sullen and revengeful. Then they picketed the plants, they waylaid workmen, they threatened destruction of property. Under the leadership of Gabriel and Kranich, they kept the laboring element of the community in a turmoil, the proprietors of the mills in a state of constant apprehension, the peaceful citizens of the community fearful lest at any moment the volcano rumbling and grumbling under the feet of industry should break out in violent eruption.

Such was the situation on the day that the court martial convened at Fairweather to try the charges against First Lieutenant Halpert McCormack.

The session was held in the large company room

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which was crowded to the doors with both Guardsmen and civilians.

The court consisted of five commissioned officers and a judge advocate, none of them under the grade of captain. The commissioned officers were in full dress, wearing their swords; the judge advocate was in undress uniform without his sword. It was his business to protect both the organized militia and the rights of the accused. The ranking officer present was Colonel Wagstaff, who presided.

The accused man, with his counsel, Lieutenant Brownell, sat at a side table, and the Barriscales, father and son, representing the complainants, sat with their counsel, Captain Flower of Company A, at another table. The scene was impressive, the atmosphere of the place was tense with suppressed excitement.

After the order convening the court had been read, and the members of the court had been duly sworn, the defendant was arraigned and the charges and specifications were read to him. He was, necessarily, the center of interest. Standing there in full dress uniform without his sword, pale, and somewhat haggard from loss of sleep, he nevertheless looked the soldier that he was. He knew that his case was hopeless. Brownell had told him so at the last. All that he expected now to do was to try to justify himself, so far as possible, in the eyes of the community. Beyond that he was ready to

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submit to the judgment of the court. So, when the time came for him to plead, he answered in a voice firm with the consciousness of innocence of the charges as drawn and brought against him:

“Not guilty.”

Then began the calling of witnesses. There were plenty of them indeed who had heard the defendant say that in his opinion the wage system was all wrong, that wealth obtained from the product of labor should be fairly divided between the capitalist and the workman, and that his sympathies in the present industrial conflict were entirely with the men, all of whom should be permitted to resume their old places on their own terms. There was more evidence to the effect that McCormack had declared that the President and the Congress were but pawns in the hands of wealth, and that the present political system was but an instrument for the exploitation of labor. It was all very crude, sophomoric and harmless, but it had about it an air of disloyalty that was distinctly damaging to the chances of the young defendant.

Then First Sergeant Ben Barriscale was called to the stand as a witness for the prosecution. He could do little more than to repeat, in substance, the evidence already given, but he made it stronger, more direct, more convincing. He laid especial stress on the attitude of the defendant toward the parties in the existing strike, his criticism of the



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owners of the mills, his sympathy with the idle workmen who were threatening revenge and disorder. While the animus of the witness was plain, his testimony was not to be lightly considered.

Brownell took him in hand for cross-examination.

"You and the defendant were rival candidates last year for the office of first lieutenant, were you not?"

"I was a candidate," replied the witness sharply. "I believe the defendant was one also."

"And the defendant won out?"

"By one vote, yes."

"And you felt pretty sore about it?"

"I felt humiliated and outraged because his rank was inferior to mine, and, holding the opinions he did and does, he had no right to the office."

"And you declared, at the time of the election, in the presence of the entire company, that either McCormack would be dismissed from the Guard or you would get out of it; that you would refuse to serve in the same company with him; you said that, did you not?"

"I did, and I repeat it now. He's not a fit man for any loyal Guardsman to serve with or under."

Barriscale's voice, resonant with wrath, reached to every corner of the room. The members of the



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court glanced at one another in apparent surprise and apprehension.

Brownell waved his hand to the witness and said smilingly:

“That is all.”

When Ben left the stand the elder Barriscale was called to it to tell of existing industrial conditions in the city, and of the danger of violent interference with peaceful workmen and the rights of property; such interference as might, and probably would, in the absence of the state police, call for protection at the hands of the National Guard. He gave it as his judgment, although the admission of his declaration was strenuously objected to by Brownell as being but opinion evidence, that it would be utterly unsafe to entrust the protection of property and the lives of workmen to a body of troops in command of an officer with the record of Lieutenant McCormack.

“Mr. Barriscale,” asked Brownell, on cross-examination, “are you aware that when Lieutenant McCormack received his commission, he swore to defend the constitution of the United States and of this State, against all enemies, foreign and domestic?”

“I presume he did,” was the curt reply.

“And you believe that he now stands ready to violate that oath?”

“I believe that the oath means nothing to him as

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against the red-flag and red-hand policy that he advocates, and the traitorous class whose cause he has taken up."

"You share with your son a certain resentment and bitterness against the defendant on account of his success in the election to the first lieutenancy?"

"I thought and still think, sir, that that election was an outrage against decency. No self-respecting man should be content to serve under an officer so elected, and so identified with the worst elements in the community."

The witness's face was red with rage, and he pounded the table in front of him with his clenched fist as he spoke.

"That is all, Mr. Barriscale."

Suave and smiling, Brownell waved the manufacturer from the stand.

To draw from a witness an admission of hatred for the person against whom he is testifying is to give a body blow to the value of his testimony, and in this respect Brownell was well satisfied with his cross-examination of the Barriscales, both father and son.

Then came the star witness for the prosecution in the person of Chick Dalloway. Poor Chick! For two hours he had been waiting outside the courtroom in abject misery. Since the day when Brownell revealed to him the probable result of having given certain information to McCormack's enemies,

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he had scarcely eaten or slept. Once he had gone to McCormack himself, to bewail his unfortunate revelations. It was pitiful to see him. Hal tried to cheer and comfort him, but he would not be comforted. Now, at the trial, under the badgering of Barriscale's lawyer he was about to clinch the fate of the best friend he had on earth. He knew it. He knew that after he had said what he would be compelled to say, Halpert McCormack would be discredited as a citizen and disgraced as a soldier; and he, Chick Dalloway, would be absolutely powerless to prevent it.

He walked up between the rows of chairs, moving from side to side as he went. His knees were strangely weak. His face was pale and drawn, and his eyes seemed to be looking into some far distance.

He took the oath and dropped into the witness-chair by the table, and waited for the torture that he knew would be his, and for the tragedy that was bound to swallow up his beloved lieutenant.

## CHAPTER XV

**T**HE buzz of excitement due to Chick's appearance on the witness stand had scarcely subsided, and the first question had not yet been asked him, when a man, breathless and perturbed, entered the court-room, pushed his way up to the table where the Barriscales were sitting, and announced, in a loud whisper, that a riot was at that moment in progress at the Barriscale mills. Immediately all was confusion. People began hastily to leave the room, and the president of the court martial, after consulting with his associates, and with counsel on both sides, announced an adjournment until the following Tuesday.

There had, indeed, been a serious disturbance on the plaza in front of the mills, but by the time the Barriscales reached there the trouble was practically over. Two men, returning from their dinners to their work in the shops, had been set upon by pickets of the Industrialists and badly beaten. Supporters of both sides had hurried to the scene, and the fracas had promised to be a bloody one when the police, heavily reinforced by Barriscale

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guards, descended upon the combatants, rescued the union workers, and clubbed their adversaries from the plaza. But when the mob, frenzied and cursing, had been driven back, the rioters left one of their number prone and bleeding on the pavement, and that one was a woman, Marie Brussiloff, the boldest and most bigoted leader of the local Industrialist army. She was lifted up by the police, thrust into an ambulance, rattled away to the City Hospital, and for many a day her comrades saw her no more. But her fate aroused such a spirit of resentment and revenge as boded ill for the forces of law and order, for the safety of capitalist property, and for the lives of union workmen.

That evening as Donatello sat at his table in the office and press-room of *The Disinherited*, he heard footsteps on the stairs and recognized them. It was General Chick who was coming. No one else had quite the same method of climbing the stairs.

When the boy came stumbling in, and the editor caught a glimpse of his face in the lamplight, he was startled at its appearance. He had not seen him before for two days. With the court-martial impending it had been impossible for Chick to follow the routine of his regular tasks. Now he stood there, his cap in his hand, white faced, trembling with the excitement that was still on him, the pain of his unfortunate position still mirrored in his eyes.

If there had been, in Donatello's mind, any

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thought of rebuking his dilatory employee, that thought disappeared when he looked at him. Any one could see that the boy was suffering.

"Why, Chick!" he exclaimed, "what is the matter? Have you been sick; yes?"

"No," replied Chick stoutly; "I ain't been sick; I been busy. I jest come to say I'm goin' to quit."

"To quit? You mean you will leave my employ?"

"That's what I mean. I can't stan' it here no longer."

"The work; is it too hard?"

"No; that's easy enough."

"Is it that I have been unkind to you?"

"No; I ain't got no fault to find the way I been treated. It's account o' Lieutenant 'Cormack."

"Has he asked you that you quit?"

"No; no! He ain't asked nothin'. But if I hadn't 'a' be'n here I wouldn't 'a' got into this trouble. If I hadn't 'a' heard what he said here that night I wouldn't 'a' had to be a witness ag'inst him. Now I've got to tell; and it's goin' to break him. I hadn't no business to come here in the first place."

Chick dropped into a chair, put his elbow on the table and rested his head in his hand. He was a picture of despair. Donatello gazed at him curiously for a moment, and said nothing. But when he did speak his voice was vibrant with sympathy.

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"It is not you," he said, "who should yourself accuse. You have done nothing. If it is to blame, the fault is mine. It was I who asked him that he come. It was I who brought him into contact with these men to whom he spoke words. You have simply heard them. The law, it makes you tell that which you have heard. How can fault be yours?"

He spread out his hands appealingly.

"I don't know," replied Chick, wearily. "All I know is I hadn't ought to 'a' come here; and I'm goin' to quit. That's what I come for, to tell you I'm goin' to quit. An' you don't owe me nothin'. You've treated me white; I want to be fair with you."

Even if there had been any basis for contention, Donatello would not have had the heart to argue the matter. The boy was suffering too keenly, and it was evident that his mind was made up.

"It is as you will," he said. "It must be so. If it is that I can commend you to the future employer, you shall ask it. I will so do—gladly."

"You're good to say that," replied Chick. "But I won't need no recommend. I won't never take no job in a printin' shop ag'in."

He was through with his errand and he rose to go. He appeared to be dizzy, and Donatello, thinking he was about to fall, rose and reached toward him a helping hand.



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But the boy steadied himself without assistance and stood firm.

"It ain't nothin'," he said. "I used to have them spells; but I got over 'em. I'll git over these."

He put on his cap, said good-night to his sometime employer, and left the room. Donatello went with him to the head of the stairs and saw him reach the bottom of the flight in safety, then he returned to his room. But he did not immediately resume his work. He sat, for many minutes, his chin in his hand, in deep thought.

The day following the outbreak at the mills was Saturday. From early morning rumors of further trouble had filled the air. Yet everything was quiet. No union workmen had been molested, even the pickets of the Industrial workers had been withdrawn. People versed in the ways of syndicalism predicted that it was the calm before the storm. They were right.

At noon, information, carried by dependable spies, reached the Barriscale headquarters to the effect that the cause of the Industrialists in Fairweather had been taken up by their brethren in a neighboring city, and that active and aggressive aid was to be immediately forthcoming. Incensed at the treatment of their fellows by the police, angered that one of their women should be wounded, they were to march in a body on the Barriscale works, and demand reinstatement for their

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brethren, under penalty of having the works taken over by the Industrialist army.

It was a desperate programme; it called for drastic measures of prevention. The chief of police admitted that his force would be unable to cope with such a body of marchers and rioters as the Industrialists could undoubtedly muster. The state police had troubles of their own at the coal mines and could not be spared. It was plain that the National Guard must be looked to for protection.

An appeal to the Governor of the State by the mayor of Fairweather resulted, after a considerable exchange of telegrams, in the giving of authority to use the militia to prevent rioting.

It was late in the afternoon when the order came down through regimental headquarters to Captain Murray to mobilize his men at the armory, to hold them in readiness for immediate action, and to use his discretion about putting them into the field. At seven o'clock ninety-five per cent of the enlisted men were present at the armory and under arms. They were lounging about the drill-hall, sitting in the company room, indulging in athletic sports in the basement. Some one said that the story of the proposed invasion was a false alarm anyway, and that there would be nothing doing. At seven-thirty Captain Murray jumped into a waiting automobile and started for his home, promising to return

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inside of an hour. At half-past eight the telephone bell in the officers' quarters rang viciously again and again.

"Central must be having a fit!" said the second lieutenant putting the receiver to his ear.

McCormack, facing him as he sat, saw his eyes widen and his face go white. Brownell turned from the transmitter long enough to explain to Hal:

"Murray's been in a smash-up; badly hurt; taken to hospital!"

Then he asked some hurried questions of the person who was talking to him, apparently obtained all the information he could, and hung up the receiver. Hal still sat facing him with expectant and apprehensive eyes.

"That's terrible!" exclaimed the second lieutenant.

"What happened?" asked McCormack.

"Why, there was an automobile collision down somewhere on Main Street. Lewis just telephoned me. Tipped Murray's car over, broke his leg, smashed his ribs. He's still unconscious."

Brownell got to his feet and began pacing hurriedly up and down the floor.

But Hal sank back in his chair, frightened, nerveless and speechless. He knew that, with Captain Murray disabled, the command of Company E would devolve upon him, and in his heart he knew that he was not fit to be entrusted with that

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authority. No wonder his pulse fluttered, and his breath came quick, and that he stared across the room with unseeing eyes.

Brownell stopped now and then, in his hurried marching, to give vent to his feelings of grief and anxiety, but McCormack, submerged in thought, was still silent.

Some one knocked at the door and came in to give details, that he had learned from an eye-witness, of the accident to Captain Murray.

Down-stairs the drill-hall buzzed with excitement and indignation. For it was suspected that the injury to the captain was the result of a plot to deprive the company of the services of its regular leader at a critical time, and throw the command to an officer whose declared sympathies were with the prospective rioters. There appeared to have been no excuse for the accident. A car containing two strangers, evidently of some foreign nationality, had deliberately collided with Captain Murray's automobile at the corner of Main Street and Maple Avenue. The reckless drivers had been arrested and committed to the lock-up, but would give no information concerning themselves or their errand in the city. Barriscale was loud in his demand that a committee should go to Lieutenant Brownell and insist on his assuming command of the company; but the proposition was frowned down by most of the enlisted men. In spite of all

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that they had heard and seen they still had faith in the first lieutenant and were willing to go out under his leadership.

At nine o'clock Brownell and McCormack commandeered a car and drove to the hospital. But their visit was fruitless. Captain Murray could not be seen. He was in a serious condition, semi-conscious, beginning to suffer greatly. His wife and daughter were in the corridor with white faces and tearful eyes, tormented with anxiety.

When the two commissioned officers returned to the armory they learned that news had come over the wire confirming the rumor of an invasion. It was definitely stated that a large number of radicals and terrorists were secretly preparing to leave the neighboring city some time in the night and march to Fairweather on a hostile errand. But they had not yet started, and Fairweather was twelve miles away.

So, at ten o'clock, the Guardsmen took their shelter-tent rolls and blankets, adjusted them for sleeping purposes, and flung themselves down on the armory floor to rest until the command should come to "fall in."

Then some one inquired for Chick, and it was recalled that he had not been seen at the armory all the afternoon and evening. Every one knew that excitement like this would have been meat and drink to him. Why was he not here?

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Up-stairs, in the officers' quarters, McCormack and Brownell were again alone. The second lieutenant was reading up on field maneuvers. The first lieutenant, torn with conflicting emotions and desires, was pacing the floor. Suddenly he stopped, and faced Brownell.

"Joe," he said, "you've got to take this company out when the time comes; I can't!"

Brownell looked up at him incredulously.

"What's the reason you can't?" he inquired.

"Because I'm not fit to. Because, after what they heard in court yesterday, the boys will have no confidence in me. Because I'm under court-martial, and ought to be under arrest. Because I'm afraid of myself. If the worst comes to the worst there'll be a conflict between my duty to the Guard and the State, and my duty to those with whose cause I sympathize. You know what I mean. Can't you see how utterly impossible it is for me to take command of this company?"

He held out his hands appealingly.

"No," replied Brownell, promptly, "I can't see. You're the ranking officer, and ——"

Hal interrupted him impatiently:

"That doesn't matter. I'll go away. I'll leave the city. I'll make it a necessity for you to assume command."

Brownell began to show impatience.

"You'll do nothing of the kind!" he exclaimed.

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"You'll do your duty to the State and the Guard and yourself. This gang of hoodlums? Why, man, they're not men looking for their jobs! They're just common rioters and bullies and criminals, bent on tearing the constitution of the United States to bits, and throwing the pieces into the gutter. Look here! do you know what you swore to do when you took your oath as a commissioned officer? You swore to defend the constitution of the United States and of this State against all enemies foreign and domestic. Now, go and do it. It's up to you. It's the first chance you've had. Go and do it!"

"But, Joe, I know these people. I know what their aspirations are, and I know they are sincere. Their leaders are my friends. How could I give orders to shoot them down?"

Brownell sprang from his chair. At last his patience was exhausted.

"Friends!" he shouted savagely. "Your friends! These thugs! These would-be murderers! And your own captain their first victim! Why, you cringing coward you, your blood ought to boil in your veins when you think of the crimes of which these traitors have been and want to be guilty. Friends! Heaven save the mark!"

Hal did not get angry; he could not. He knew that Brownell was castigating him because he loved him. He dropped into a chair by the table and

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rested his head in his hands and was silent. Then his comrade, knowing that he was suffering, took pity on him, and came over and placed an affectionate hand on his shoulder.

"Forgive me, old man!" he said. "I didn't mean to hurt you. The thing got on my nerves and I had to let go. But you're dead wrong. You're in command of this company, and you've got to take it out."

McCormack looked up wearily.

"At the risk," he said, "of leading it into disaster and disgrace? Why do you compel me to face such a temptation as this?"

Brownell's hand tightened on Hal's shoulder.

"Because," he replied, "I know you and trust you. I know what things lie at the bottom of your heart; red blood, pure patriotism, soldierly pride, the honor of a gentleman. I was never so little afraid of anything in my life as I am that you will either disgrace us, or dishonor yourself."

The first lieutenant did not reply. He was about to say something, but his lips trembled, his eyes filled with tears, and he dropped his head again into his hands and was silent.

Down-stairs all was quiet. The Guardsmen were sleeping. Through an open window of the officers' quarters there came the measured tramp of the sentry on the flagged walk outside.

At midnight the sky was clear, the stars were



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shining, the street-lights across the river gleamed like blazing jewels in the darkness. And over the sleeping world hung still the portent of evil and the promise of strife.

At five o'clock on Sunday morning the call came. Word was received at the armory that a marching mob, three hundred strong, was approaching the outskirts of Fairweather. At five-thirty, in command of Lieutenant McCormack, Company E was on the plaza fronting the Barriscale mills. Hot coffee and biscuits had been served to the men before leaving the armory, and now, at ease, with arms stacked, sitting, standing, talking in groups, the Guardsmen awaited the coming of the mob.

It is not to be supposed that there had been no discussion among the enlisted men concerning the propriety and risk of being led into action by Lieutenant McCormack. Even after Sergeant Barriscale's failure to have the men demand the temporary retirement of the first lieutenant, the subject would not down. There were those who felt, and not without reason, that it was taking too long a chance to permit an avowed sympathizer with the disorderly element in the ranks of labor to lead them on such an expedition as this. Barriscale, himself, was bitter in his continued denunciation of such a programme.

"The man should have had a sufficient sense of decency," he declared to a little group that sur-

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rounded him on the pavement, "to have prevented him from taking this company out. I don't know what he intends to do," he added; "but if his orders, or his refusal to give orders, show that he intends to let this mob have its way and work its will, I, for one, will revolt. If the first lieutenant plays traitor and the second lieutenant's afraid to take hold, I'll assume command of the company myself; I've got a right to under the Articles of War, and I'll arrest McCormack and have him punished for treason and sedition. I tell you, boys, the honor of this company and of the whole National Guard is at stake this morning, and I'll stop at nothing to save it."

And there were those who agreed with him.

In order to place his men most effectively for service, McCormack had concentrated them on the northerly side of the plaza to the right of the entrance gates to the shops, and just in rear of the flagstaff which in the early morning was still bare of the colors. This position was still further strengthened by the fact that the troops covered the mouths of the three streets leading from the central city and converging at that point. Only the mouth of the street leading to the south was unguarded. This was the street up which the marchers would come, and across this street, a block away, the police had thrown a platoon which, it was hoped, would prevent the mob from reaching the mills or coming into contact with the militia.

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Lieutenant McCormack, having made his plans, and having given final instructions to his officers, sauntered across the corner of the plaza to the mouth of the main street leading into the city, and leaned against a lamp-post at the curb. He was not only deep in thought, his mind was in a very tumult of emotions. He knew that he had reached "the parting of the ways"; that he could no longer serve two masters, that he must either "hate the one and love the other," or "hold to the one and despise the other." The time had come when he must either give undivided allegiance to the flag of his country, or fling himself, body and soul, into the movement for the merging of the flags of all countries into the red flag of social radicalism.

The sun, well above the crest of the hill range to the east, threw long shafts of yellow light down through the open spaces of the streets, and flooded the plaza with a carpet of shining gold. An apple tree in a near-by yard was a pink and white marvel of beauty and bloom. All around him birds were rioting in their spring-time songs.

Hal had the soul of an artist, and in any other mood he would have breathed in the glory of the morning. But its splendor fell now upon unseeing eyes, and its music upon ears that did not hear.

Lieutenant Brownell approached him and saluted.

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"I am informed," he said, "that the custodian of the flag here is about to hoist it on the staff."

McCormack returned the salute.

"You will bring the company to attention," he said, "and do honor to the colors."

Two men came from the Barriscale offices with the flag, and ran the ends of the halyards through the rings. The company was brought to "attention," and then to "present arms," while the colors mounted the staff.

As the banner rose, as it gave itself to the fresh morning air, as it rolled itself out against the strong but gentle wind, as it flashed back its glorious colors in the splendid sunlight, something gripped Lieutenant McCormack's heart. Perhaps it was a spirit of patriotism that, heretofore lying dormant, now rose from the tragic struggle that was going on in his own soul. He remembered that his father had served under this flag, that his father's father had fought for it, that hundreds of thousands of men, on battle-fields, in fever camps, in prison pens, on the decks of sinking ships, had died that it might wave; that millions of hearts to-day beat faster as eyes dim with patriotic sentiment looked up at it—why? Mistakes had been made under it indeed, political crimes had been committed in its name; graft, greed, unholy ambitions had flourished in its shelter, while the deserving poor by thousands had toiled and sweat in the shadow of it, and found no

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rest. And yet—and yet, until that far-off day shall come when the hearts of all men shall be purged of selfishness and sin, what nobler flag, what symbol of a better government, more free from tyranny, more blest with liberty, more rich with opportunity, floats anywhere in all the world? Day by day, year by year, rising out of turmoil and tribulation and the constant struggle for better things, to ever higher and broader planes of life and levels of true democracy, what other people on earth have a greater right or a richer incentive to love the one flag that protects their homes and thrills their hearts, than the people of the United States of America?

The colors were at the top of the staff, the hal-yards were fastened to the clamps, the company was brought to an “order arms,” and again to a rest at will, and the period of waiting was resumed. But Lieutenant McCormack’s eyes were still fixed on the flag. Somehow, suddenly, there was a fascination in the sight of it that he could not resist; his country’s flag, the flag of his ancestors, the symbol of the soul of America; America, his home. That strange grip on his heart grew tighter, firmer, deeper—was it pain, was it sweetness, was it one of that trio of highest and noblest sentiments that stir humanity, love of one’s own country as distinct from every other country in the world, that caused his eyes to fill with tears as he stood with raised head and gazed on the “Banner of the Stars”?

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He was suddenly aware that some one was standing at his side, and when he looked down he saw that it was General Chick. The boy, too, was staring at the colors.

"Ain't it beautiful?" he asked.

"Chick," was the reply, "I feel this morning that that flag is the most beautiful thing in the world, and that every American citizen should love it."

"And," added Chick, "should ought to want to be a soldier an' fight under it. That's what I've been wanting to be; but lately I'm kind o' discouraged."

"Why discouraged, Chick?"

"Oh, I'm afraid I won't never git into the Guard now. It feels as though somethin's gone wrong inside o' me."

McCormack looked down at the boy, at his gray face, his hollow eyes, his sunken cheeks, at the evidences of physical pain with which his countenance was marked, and he felt a sudden pity for him.

"You're not well, Chick," he said; "you ought not to be here."

"I know," was the labored reply. "But I couldn't help comin'. I heard about it, an' I got up an' come away while the old woman was asleep."

A wan smile spread over his face at the memory of his diplomatic escape.

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"I thought, mebbe," he continued, "I might never see the boys ag'in—in action; and I—wanted to see 'em."

"Chick, you must go back home. You're too ill to stay here."

The boy ignored the command and asked a question.

"They ain't through tryin' you yet, air they?"

"No, the trial will be resumed next Tuesday. Chick, you ——"


"Well, Mr. 'Cormack, if I should—should jest happen, you know—to die before then, they couldn't git nothin' on you, could they?"

He was leaning against a tie-post at the curb, trembling and exhausted. He looked up anxiously and wistfully at the lieutenant as he spoke.

McCormack bent down and put his arm around the boy's shoulder and turned his face toward the city.

"Chick, don't talk that way. You can't hurt me in a thousand years so much as I've hurt myself many a time in a day. Now go back home and try to get well. We can't do without you in the Guard."

A man came across the plaza from the Barriscale offices, and thrust a written message into the lieutenant's hands. It was to the effect that the marchers were at the outskirts of the city; that they had sacked provision and liquor stores on their way,



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were drunk, riotous, boastful and destructive, and would reach the plaza in less than ten minutes.

Even as McCormack finished reading the message he heard in the distance the dull roar that presaged the coming of the mob.



## CHAPTER XVI

**W**HEN Lieutenant McCormack, after reading the message announcing the coming of the mob, crossed the plaza and faced his company, he found his men already in ranks and standing at "order arms." They also had heard the ominous sound of approaching disorder. Already the forefront of the procession was in sight on the street leading up from the south. Inflamed with the liquor which they had seized in the course of their journey, the exuberant and reckless spirit of the marchers was showing itself. Men were singing, shouting, waving clubs, demanding justice for their fellow-workers, and the recognition of the rule of the proletariat. At the junction of every street and alley their members had been swelled by the angry and resentful Industrialists of Fairweather. The cordon of police that had attempted to block their way was swept down as though it had been a rope of straw. Now, five hundred strong, reckless and determined, they were bearing down on the center of the city's industries.

The waiting hundreds of citizens who, for the last hour, had lined the curbs about the open place, be-

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gan to withdraw. They did not care to be caught between the clubs of the rioters and the bayonets of the militia.

The mob, filling the main street from wall to wall, entered the plaza like a rushing stream which, confined between barriers at the side, is powerful and resistless, but, spreading out over the broad lowland, loses its momentum and its destructive force. It was so with the marchers. The wide space into which they emptied themselves weakened their physical power, but in no wise altered their purpose or their spirit of aggressiveness. When they caught sight of the American flag waving from the staff before their faces, and saw the silent, khaki-clad ranks of soldiers standing at attention beneath it, they sent up a howl of derision. These were but the visible sign and symbol of the powers of oppression against which they fought. Therefore they wanted the world to know that they despised and defied them.

From somewhere outside, a drayman's cart was brought and rattled across the pavement to the center of the plaza. A man leaped up into it and began to harangue the crowd. Italian, German, Slavonic words and sentences rolled from his tongue with equal fluency. His hearers applauded him wildly.

Sergeant Barriscale could endure the situation no longer. He brought his rifle to a "shoulder

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arms," stepped one pace to the front and saluted his commanding officer.

"Lieutenant McCormack," he said, "do you intend to permit those fellows to stir the rabble up to violence with incendiary speeches?"

The lieutenant acknowledged the salute and replied calmly:

"It is not our mission here to interfere with the right of free speech or of public assembly."

"But," shouted Ben, "this is simply a mob. The thing will develop into a riot. The time to stop it is now. I demand that you put this company into action and disperse that crowd."

Hal looked his first sergeant squarely in the eyes. He was not angry, but there was a certain unusual note of decision in his voice as he replied.

"I shall not permit this company," he said, "so long as I am in command, to oppress or harass any person acting within his rights. You will take your post."

"But these hoodlums are not within their rights. They ——"

"You will take your post, sir!"

The look in Lieutenant McCormack's eyes, the ring in his voice, admonished Barriscale that the parley was at an end. He stepped back into his place at the right of the line, and came to "order arms" with a crash of the butt of his rifle on the pavement.

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McCormack's language had convinced him that, so far as the Guardsmen were concerned, the rioters were to have their way and work their will. And the same conviction was not far removed from the breasts of many of the men in the ranks.

The voice of the orator on the dray grew louder, his words tumbled in torrents from his lips, he was gesticulating like a man gone mad. His hearers, dominated by his fierce eloquence, applauded him to the echo. At the end of a fiery peroration there was a sudden movement of the crowd. Some one thrust up a pole with a red flag waving from its tip. Clubs were lifted into the air. From five hundred throats came a yell of defiance. Every hate-lined face was turned toward the soldiers still standing quietly at "order arms." It was a critical moment. The orator flung his hands into the air and begged his followers to restrain their wrath until he should intercede for them with the capitalist-hired militia. He dismounted from the dray and, for a moment, was lost in the crowd. But, presently, with another leader at his side, he crossed the narrow, open space that separated the ranks of turbulence from the ranks of order and law.

At the foot of the flagstaff the two men met Lieutenant McCormack and stopped and addressed him. He recognized them, then, for the first time, as the two leaders whom he had met in Donatello's shop. The American was again the spokesman.

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"May I ask," he said, "the purpose of bringing soldiers here?"

Lieutenant McCormack, standing with folded arms, responded quietly but firmly:

"To prevent disorder and violence."

"There will be no disorder and no violence," replied Kranich, "unless an attempt is made to thwart my followers in their purpose."

"What is their purpose?"

The question came as mildly as though it had to do with a summer shower instead of a prospective riot.

"Our purpose," was the response, "is to pass up the streets, the entrances to which you have covered with your troops, and spread our propaganda in the public places of the city, which is our right."

"I understand. Is that your entire programme?"

The men in the ranks moved uneasily. It was apparent to them that their commanding officer was about to accede to the demand of the leaders of the mob.

Kranich hesitated, and studied his questioner's face for a moment before replying. He was debating in his mind whether he should evade the real issue, or whether he should depend upon the friendly sympathy and anticipated acquiescence of the first lieutenant, and disclose the full purpose of the marchers. He made a quick decision, and chose

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the latter course as likely to lead to quicker and more satisfactory results.

"No," he replied, "we intend to take possession of this plant before us, in behalf of the men who have a right to work there and to receive full compensation for their toil."

"I see. And what is it that you wish me to do?"

Again the mild, acquiescent, deprecatory manner, with its intimation of a truculent yielding to the will of the mob.

The faces of the Guardsmen were a study in the expression of anxious doubt and increasing dismay. Brownell felt chills creeping down his back. The time had come when he, too, staunchest supporter and firmest friend of Halpert McCormack, had to keep tight grip on his faith in him in order to prevent it from sinking out of sight.

Barriscale was in a tumult of wrath. That McCormack should even consent to parley with the leaders of the mob was unbelievable and unendurable. "Bullets, not words," he said in a hoarse whisper to the men at his left. "That's what they want, bullets, not words!"

Kranich did not reply directly to the lieutenant's last question. He gesticulated slightly, assumed an oratorical manner, and said:

"The time has come for you to prove by your works your declared faith in the righteousness of the proletarian movement."

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"What is it that you wish me to do?"

The question was repeated, perhaps a little more firmly, a little more distinctly than before, and it now brought a definite answer.

"We wish you to withdraw your troops from the plaza. The sight of them excites and angers my followers. If they remain here I shall not be responsible for the consequences."

"I understand."

Lieutenant McCormack turned and faced his company. It was apparent that he was about to yield to the demand of the captains of the mob and give such orders to his company as would lead to its immediate withdrawal. Kranich and Gabriel looked at each other and smiled with satisfaction. The men in the ranks grew sick at heart. Brownell clutched the butt of his pistol in sheer desperation. Barriscale snatched his rifle up from the pavement and started once more to leave the ranks, but was checked by the command that now issued from the lips of the first lieutenant.

"Fix bayonet!"

The first sergeant dropped back into his place. Brownell's heart leaped in his breast. The Guardsmen caught their breaths and wondered and were happy.

But there was no delay in the execution of the order. The men came to "parade rest" and drew their bayonets from their scabbards. The click

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sounded sharp and ominous as the springs caught on the muzzles of the rifle barrels. Then, with shining blades fixed, the "order arms" was promptly resumed.

Lieutenant McCormack turned again to face the ringleaders. The smiles had vanished from their faces, their eyes were filled with a surprise that was not unmixed with indignation.

"In answer to your request," said the lieutenant, "I will say that I decline to withdraw my troops. But I demand that you, who seem to be leaders of this crowd, take your men back at once along the street by which they came. Otherwise I shall clear the plaza at the point of the bayonet."

His voice, rising as he proceeded, rang out at the last with a clearness and precision that left no room for doubt as to the meaning of his words.

Against all military precedent and custom the men of Company E, with almost a single voice, gave vent to a great shout of approval. The reaction was so great, the relief was so tremendous, that a week in the guard-house would scarcely have been sufficient to repress this exuberant expression of their feeling.

The faces of the leaders of the mob blazed with wrath, and their eyes shot fire. They had been mistaken in their man. It was Gabriel who now spoke up.

"And is it," he cried angrily, the words tumbling



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from his bearded lips, "that we are deceived? Are you also traitor? Judas? Hound? I curse you! I defy your guns!"

His face was distorted with rage. His whole body was writhing with ungovernable passion.

"See!" he shrieked, "I despise your capitalist flag! I spit upon it! I destroy it!"

As he spoke he drew from his waistcoat pocket a big clasp-knife, opened the blade, and made a lunge toward the flagstaff with the evident purpose of slashing the halyards and dropping the flag to be trampled on. Quick and dextrous as he was, the first lieutenant of Company E was quicker. In a blaze of patriotic wrath he cleared the space between him and Gabriel, and brought the butt of his pistol crashing down upon the head of the would-be desecrator of the flag.

The knife dropped from the man's hand and went clattering to the pavement, and he, himself, swaying, staggering for a moment, fell, bleeding and unconscious, at the foot of the staff he would have despoiled.

If the cheer that had greeted McCormack's ultimatum to the leader of the mob had been whole-souled and exuberant, the yell that came now from the throats of half a hundred khaki-clad enthusiasts was vociferous and overwhelming. At last they had a soldier and a patriot for a leader, and they wanted the world to know it.

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Barriscale alone was displeased and dissatisfied.

"It was a reckless thing to do," he shouted. "Those fellows over there will see red now. Bayonets are no use. We've got to shoot into 'em or they'll murder us. Look at 'em!"

The rioters presented, indeed, a terrifying spectacle. Stunned, for a moment, by the swift retribution that had fallen on their leader, their amazement now gave way to a frenzy of rage. Incited to still greater fury by Kranich who had precipitately fled into the midst of his followers when he saw his companion fall, the men of the invading host were clamoring for revenge. The red flag, temporarily lowered, was again shaken aloft. Men with faces distorted by wrath and a desire for vengeance were shrieking their anger, flourishing their clubs, brandishing knives, daggers, pistols, gathering from the street missiles of any and every kind with which to charge upon their enemy. They could not conceive that sixty Guardsmen in khaki, with rifles and bayonets, could check the murderous onslaught of five hundred desperate and daring men.

Already stones and brickbats were hurtling through the air, and falling in the midst of the troops. A stone struck Manning's head, cut through his hat, and sent him staggering and bleeding to the curb.

"Charge bayonet!"

McCormack's command rang out clear and dis-

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tinct above the din and tumult of the riot. As it went down the line the rifle of every man was thrown to the front, his left hand supporting the barrel, his right hand grasping the stock. The points of sixty bayonets, four paces apart, ranged in the sweeping arc of a circle, converged in the direction of the howling and advancing mob. Barriscale alone was in revolt.

"It's wild!" he shouted. "We've got to give 'em bullets, not bayonets! This is no pink tea! This is war! I say, load your guns, men, load! load!"

Obedying his own command, he pulled back the bolt of his piece, withdrew a clip from his cartridge belt, pushed it with trembling and hurried fingers into the slot of his rifle, forced the cartridges into the magazine, thrust the bolt home, and then looked around in amazement to see that no one else had followed his lead.

McCormack, though his face went white with anger, still thought it prudent to let Barriscale have his fling. The man was excited, terrified, utterly beyond even self-control; he could harm no one but himself.

The calmness, the deliberation, the apparent patience which the commanding officer was exercising in the handling of his force, appeared to give courage to the attacking mob, the front rank of which, forced on from behind, was now within

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twenty paces of the line of army steel. The jeering was hideous and the yelling terrific. Stones, brickbats, missiles of all kinds went crashing into the silent ranks.

"Advance!"

McCormack gave the command and repeated it. It was instantly obeyed. With measured step, bayonets pointed ahead of them at the height of their chins, firmness in every eye, determination gripping every inch of muscle, the men of Company E moved forward in the face of such a mad and murderous assault as few of them ever cared to witness again.

All but Sergeant Barriscale. He was now in flat revolt. He seemed bereft of his senses, wild with rage or fear or both.

"I'll not advance!" he yelled. "You boys are going to your death. They'll murder you. I say again, load and fire!" He turned savagely toward the commanding officer. "Fool!" he cried, "to send your men to slaughter. I defy your orders!"

Then, indeed, the first lieutenant lost grip on his patience. He thrust his pistol into its holster, reached out a right hand nerved with wrath, tore Barriscale's loaded and unbayoneted rifle from his grasp, and tossed it to Manning sitting on the curb. With both hands he gripped the shoulders of the first sergeant and flung him about, face to the rear.



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“Report at the armory,” he cried, “and consider yourself under arrest till I return.”

Then he swung about and followed his men into action.

As the troops pressed on the howling and shrieking died down, and the firing of missiles ceased. The points of sixty bayonets were within two feet of a hundred throats grown tired with shouting. The front rank of rioters looked into the eyes of the men behind the guns and saw their own doom written there. They made a last wild attempt to thrust aside the glittering steel. The effort was futile. They only pierced and lacerated their hands and put their lives in jeopardy. Then valor gave way to discretion. They broke and fell back, crowding, pushing and trampling on their comrades in the rear. The line of bayonets lengthened till it swept the plaza and forced the last man of the riotous host into the street up which the marchers had come a short half hour before. Panic seized upon the throng, a mad desire in the breast of each one to protect himself, regardless of his fellows, against what appeared to be the murderous onslaught of the pitiless troops. There was a wild scramble, shrieks of terror, a futile effort to escape. But it was not until vacant lots, side streets unguarded by police, and at last the open country, had been reached that the defeated, scattered and terrorized invaders found safe asylum and a respite

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from their fears. So, crushed, humiliated and spiritless, bleeding from many superficial wounds, singly and in groups, the rioters found their way back to the city from which, in the early morning, they had come.

Back, on the north side of the plaza, four persons stood or sat, watching, with vivid interest, the vanishing mob and the backs of the khaki-clad troops as they disappeared in the dust and distance down the main street leading to the south.

First among them was Gabriel the anarchist, who, coming to himself, had struggled into a sitting posture the better to nurse his wounds to which the surgeon who had administered first aid to Manning was now giving his attention. Manning himself, sitting on the curb, a little weak from shock and loss of blood, lifted his feeble voice in enthusiastic acclaim as he saw the riotous army routed from the plaza and driven down the street. Chick, seated at Manning's side, joined his voice, pathetically tremulous, with the corporal's outburst of rejoicing; and back of them a multitude of order-loving and law-abiding citizens shouted vociferously their delight at the victory won over the forces of disloyalty and disruption.

Finally, Barriscale stood there, midway between the wounded rioter and the cheering Guardsman, a powerless and pathetic figure. He looked at the

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marching troops, with bayonets at the "charge," pressing the mob to its overthrow. He turned his eyes to the big buildings and the spacious yards of his father's great industrial plant, saved by the firm and wise action of Lieutenant Halpert McCormack from pillage and destruction. He gazed up at the swelling and rolling folds of the "Star-Spangled Banner," still floating, thanks to the alert patriotism of the same bold officer, in glorious symbolism from the summit of its staff. Finally his eyes fell on Corporal Manning and General Chick still sitting in front of him on the curb. His face was a study. It no longer showed any mark of excitement or anger. The emotions pictured on it were far different; wonder, humiliation, disgust, following each other in quick succession; finally the indication of a transforming force back of his countenance, no less powerful and thorough than that which this very morning had changed the tenor of the life and thought of his comrade in arms, Halpert McCormack. He came a step nearer to Manning.

"Dick," he said, "I've been a fool."

"I think, myself," replied the corporal with a wan smile, "that you've been rather indiscreet."

"Indiscreet! I've been a consummate idiot. Look at that fellow;" he half turned his head in the direction in which McCormack had disappeared;

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"getting all the honor and glory of this thing; and deserving it; and me—facing a court martial and the penitentiary—and deserving it."

He came over and sat down on the curb beside Chick, and dropped his head into his hands.

"Him," said Chick, gazing also with eyes filled with admiration after the disappearing troops, "he'll be a major-general some day."

Barriscale started up again. "I'm under arrest," he said; "I've got to go to the armory. Who's going?"

"I am," replied Manning.

"Me too," added Chick.

"Come along then, both of you."

The corporal rose uncertainly to his feet, picked up his own rifle, and started to pick up the one belonging to Barriscale with which McCormack had intrusted him.

"Here," said Chick, bravely, "give that one to me."

The first sergeant looked down on him with pitying eyes. Yesterday he would have despised him and thrust him aside. But to-day the boy was so shrunken, so white and trembling, such a pathetic little figure to undertake to carry a man's load.

"No," said Barriscale, "you can't. I'll carry 'em both, Dick, if you'll trust me."

He took both rifles, put one over each shoulder,





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pushed a way through the noisy and wondering crowd, and together the three started up the main street toward the central city.

## CHAPTER XVII

**T**HAT was a strange group that marched, three abreast, up the main street of Fairweather that Sunday morning of the riot. Sergeant Barriscale, with a rifle on each shoulder; on his right Corporal Manning, hatless, with bandaged head; and on his left, shuffling weakly along, General Chick.

"McCormack is going to get some glory out of this day," said Manning.

"He deserves it," responded Barriscale, sharply.

And Chick added: "I ain't never seen nothin' to beat it. Wasn't that great?"

Then, again, for a few minutes, they walked on in silence, save as they were met and questioned by curious and excited people hurrying toward the plaza.

Sarah Halpert came speeding down the street in her car. When she saw the strange trio she ordered her driver to draw up to the curb.

"Tell me all about it, Ben!" she exclaimed. "Did you get hurt, Dick? What's the matter with you, Chick? Where's Hal? Is he in command of the company?"

"Yes, to everything, Miss Halpert," replied

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Ben. "Dick got smashed on the head with a brickbat, Chick isn't feeling very well, and I'm disgraced. We're all going back to the armory."

"But Hal? What's he doing?"

"He's driving the rioters out of town at the point of the bayonet, Miss Halpert. He's covering himself with glory."

"Splendid!" She half rose in her seat, and clapped her hands together vigorously. Apparently she forgot all about Manning's wound, and Chick's illness, and Ben's disgrace, for she turned quickly to her driver, and ordered him to make haste ahead.

"I want to catch up with the company," she said. "I want to see Hal doing it."

And the next minute she was out of sight.

When the three men started on again Manning's footsteps were a little more uncertain, and Chick dragged himself a little more wearily than before.

In the middle of the next block Barriscale became suddenly aware that the boy was missing from his side. He looked back and saw him lying in a heap on the walk. He dropped his rifles and went and bent over him. Chick was white and insensible but he was breathing.

"Poor fellow!" said Manning, "the thing's been too much for him. What's to be done?"

Barriscale did not reply, but, looking up, he

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caught sight of a passing car. It was empty save for the driver, and he hailed it and commandeered it for his use. When it drew up to the curb he helped to lift Chick into it, and he and Manning got in beside him.

"Drive to the City Hospital," he ordered, "and break the speed law if you want to."

When they drew up under the porte-cochère at the hospital, two orderlies came, lifted out the still unconscious boy, carried him in, and started with him down the corridor.

"Where are you taking him?" asked Ben.

"To the men's ward," was the reply. "I suppose he's one of the rioters you've picked up."

"Rioter!" Ben gazed at the orderly so fiercely that the young fellow almost lost his grip on the boy's shoulders. "Rioter nothing! He's General Chick. He's a friend of mine. No men's ward for him! He's to have a private room, a special nurse, and the best the hospital affords." He turned to the superintendent who had now come up. "I wish you'd send the house surgeon to him at once. Give him everything he needs. As soon as I can get in touch with Dr. Norton I'll have him come up and look after him. Send all bills to me."

"Very well, Mr. Barriscale. We'll do our best for him."

The orderlies were already wheeling Chick to the elevator to take him up-stairs.



HE HELPED TO LIFT CHICK INTO THE CAR



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Barriscale turned to Manning.

"Now, Corporal," he said, "you can take me to the guard-house."

"No," replied Manning, "I think I'll let you go by yourself. Now that I'm here I believe I'll stay and have this wound fixed up with a permanent dressing. Besides, I want to see Captain Murray and tell him what happened this morning."

"That's right! He'll be glad to hear. Tell him the first lieutenant played the soldier to perfection. Tell him the boys were heroes. And tell him"—he hesitated a moment and then blurted it out: "that he's got a first sergeant who's a natural born fool, a disgrace to his company, and a blot on the National Guard."

Without waiting to hear the corporal's protest he turned on his heel, strode down the hall, entered the waiting car, and directed that he be driven at once to the armory.

At nine o'clock that morning Company E returned from its skirmish with the mob. A belated squad of state constabulary had arrived and taken charge of the situation, and there was no longer any occasion for the Guardsmen to remain on duty. They marched up the main street, sturdy, dusty and triumphant, followed by an admiring and applauding crowd. And there was good reason for both admiration and applause. By reason of the patience of the Guardsmen under great provoca-

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tion, and of their prompt obedience to orders, and by reason of the coolness, judgment and skill of their commanding officer, Fairweather had undoubtedly been saved from a disastrous and bloody experience. The citizens knew this and they did not hesitate to say so.

At the armory, after the first lieutenant had turned the company over to Sergeant Bangs for dismissal, he beckoned to Barriscale who, without rifle or equipment, was standing at the side-wall, and the disgraced officer stepped forward and saluted.

"You are suspended," said Lieutenant McCormack to him, "from the performance of any military duties, until your case can be taken up by the proper authorities. In the meantime you are relieved from arrest and may proceed about your ordinary business."

Sergeant Barriscale, as became a soldier, said nothing in reply. He saluted again and retired.

On the Tuesday following the riot the court martial reconvened to proceed with the case against Lieutenant McCormack. The Barriscales were not present, nor were any of their witnesses. Their counsel, however, arose and said that in view of certain developments since the last sitting of the court his clients did not care to prosecute the case further. It would not have mattered much if they had so cared. The verdict of the court was a foregone



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conclusion. The conduct of the defendant on the preceding Sunday morning had served as a complete refutation of the charges against him. Without the loss of a single life, or the destruction of any valuable property, a riotous and bloodthirsty mob had been quelled and dispersed. It was conceded that this was due to the admirable way in which Lieutenant McCormack had handled the situation. Moreover, the national emblem had been protected against a rash and violent attack, and its would-be despoiler had been summarily dealt with as he deserved to be. This was the dramatic episode that made the young lieutenant's vindication sure, and capped the climax of his popularity.

So, on the application of Brownell, the court dismissed the charges without hearing any witnesses for the defense, and, so far as could be discovered, the defendant himself was the only person in the community who was dissatisfied with the outcome of the trial. He knew that if the charges were not true in letter they were at least true in spirit, and that his own conduct had formed a sufficient foundation for them. He knew also that it was only by the narrowest sort of a margin that he had escaped being an ingrate to his country and a traitor to his flag. That he should now come off scot free, and in a blaze of glory besides, was deeply offensive to his sense of proportion, of propriety,

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and of justice. But there was nothing that he could do without the risk of bringing on further complications and disasters, save to accept the ruling of the court and the verdict of the community, and to shape his life accordingly.

With the rout of the mob that Sunday morning the backbone of the strike at the Barriscale mills, and at other industrial plants in Fairweather, was broken. Smoke again belched forth freely from the tall stacks, the roar and clatter of machinery fell heavily on the air, laboring humanity swarmed once more through the ways and byways of the shops. Workmen were no longer heckled and abused on their way to and from their homes. Many adherents of the radical labor organizations, finding themselves on the losing side, dropped their open affiliation with their destructive bodies, abandoned, for the time being at least, their anarchistic principles, and returned to work on conditions already accepted by union labor. Not that the backbone of anarchy had been broken in Fairweather. Far from it. There were still those who, cowed for the time being, were sullen and woeful, and awaited only an opportune time to exhibit openly and forcibly their resentment. Marie Brussiloff, from her cot in the hospital, and Gabriel from his headquarters in the near-by city, still suffering from their wounds, were "breathing out threatenings and slaughter." Donatello alone, of all the

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group, in the columns of *The Disinherited*, was mild and conciliatory. He appeared to be grieved rather than outraged, disappointed rather than angered. Meeting McCormack a few days after the riot, he exhibited no bitterness nor resentment but he told him that in his judgment he had missed the opportunity of a lifetime to do a splendid service for humanity.

"I feel," was Hal's reply, "that I am doing a far greater service for humanity by upholding the laws of my country than I could possibly do by letting a mob work its will."

"But those laws," protested Donatello; "you know by whom they were made."

"I know; I have gone all over that phase of the matter a thousand times. But it's democracy; and, so far, democracy has proved to be the best form of government that any peoples of the earth have ever lived under. I tell you, Donatello," he was growing eager and emphatic now, "when Gabriel tried to cut down my flag that morning, a sudden reverence for the 'Stars and Stripes' took hold of me, and I would have dared anything to protect them. I am just as much of a humanitarian as I ever was. I am just as much in sympathy with the toiling masses of the world as ever. But since that moment I have felt that my first duty is to protect my own. I believe I am not lacking in a sense of chivalry, but my mother and my sisters are my first

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concern above all other women in the world. Just so my own country must come first in my loyalty and devotion."

And never, after that, could any argument or appeal shake Halpert McCormack's conception of patriotism.

It was four days after the riot. Captain Murray was still at the hospital, recovering but slowly from the shock and severity of his wounds. There was no longer any doubt that his condition was the result of a deliberate attempt to cripple the efficiency of the local militia company on the eve of the proposed invasion of Fairweather. His assailants were being held in the county jail without bail to await the result of his injuries.

In the same hospital lay also General Chick. He was desperately ill. The powers of disease had fastened upon his crippled and weakened body with terrible avidity. It could not be denied that his grief and anxiety over the anticipated fate of his beloved lieutenant had not only hastened his illness but was mainly responsible for the ferocity of the attack. Repeated and positive assurances had not been sufficient to free his mind of the harassing belief that he, as an unwilling witness, was to be the chief cause of the officer's downfall.

It was on the morning of this fourth day that Miss Anderson, the trained nurse who was caring for Chick, went into Captain Murray's room, as she

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had been requested to do, to make her daily report concerning the boy's condition.

"He is no better," she said. "Of course we do not expect that he will be any better. But if we could only get his mind relieved as to Lieutenant McCormack's fate—you know that is what he worries about mostly—I am sure he would have less temperature, and be much more comfortable."

Captain Murray started to raise himself on his elbow, but fell back with a gasp of pain.

"Why!" he exclaimed, "hasn't he heard yet? Doesn't he know about McCormack?"

"He knows nothing new about him."

"Well, you tell him that yesterday the court martial handed down a decree dismissing the charges. Tell him that McCormack has been acquitted; that he is free. Do you understand? Tell him that the court-martial is all over, and that McCormack is free; absolutely free!"

When the nurse came in to make her afternoon report she had scarcely crossed the door-sill before Captain Murray called out to her:

"Did you tell him, Miss Anderson?"

"Yes, I told him."

"Did he understand? What did he say?"

"I think he understood. I never before saw such a rapturous look on a human face. He—he lay very quiet for—a while. Then he said ——"

Hardened as she was to pathetic sights and

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sounds, the lips of the tender-hearted nurse trembled, her voice failed her, and, with tears rolling down her cheeks, she turned and fled from the captain's room.

But McCormack had still to deal with the case of Barriscale. He knew that it was his duty to file charges with Captain Murray against the first sergeant, and he knew what those charges should be. "Behaving himself with disrespect toward his commanding officer, in violation of the 20th Article of War." "Disobeying a lawful command of his superior officer, in violation of the 21st Article of War." It was simple enough; his duty was plain. Yet, day after day went by and he took no action. He, himself, had been too near the verge of disloyalty and insubordination to make the task of preparing and presenting charges against a comrade an easy one.

But, when Captain Murray's improvement made it no longer possible to put forth the serious nature of his illness as a pretext for not disturbing him, McCormack went down to the hospital one day, determined to take the matter up and have an end of it.

"I hope," said the captain, "that you've brought with you the charges against Barriscale. It's high time something was done."

"No," was the reply. "I haven't drawn any charges. I've decided not to present any."

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In his surprise Captain Murray thrust himself up on his elbow, but he only winced now at the pain it gave him.

"What do you mean?" he asked. "Don't you know that the man is guilty?"

"Perhaps he is. But I believe he was more than half justified in what he did. As I think of it now, my only wonder is that any man in the company had any confidence in me, or was willing to follow me or obey my orders."

The captain looked his first lieutenant in the eyes and was silent. Evidently he was impressed with what McCormack had said. For when he spoke again his manner was mild and he exhibited little impatience.

"But, if you don't court-martial him what will you do with him?" he asked. "It'll never do to let such a breach of discipline go unnoticed."

"I propose to turn him over to you for admonition under the Army Regulations."

"And what shall I do with him?"

"The most you could do in that case; the most you could do if you were sitting as a summary court, would be to send him back to the ranks."

"Then I'll send him back to the ranks."

"In my judgment that would be too severe a punishment."

Up to this moment, save at the beginning of the conversation, Captain Murray had repressed his

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impatience with admirable self-control. But now it again got the better of him.

"Too severe!" he exclaimed. "Why, man! do you know that such an offense as his, in the regular army, in time of war, would be punishable with death?"

"I know. But we're not in the regular army, and we're not at war."

"If I had my way about it," was the captain's reply, "we would be both in the federal service and at war. That slaughter on the other side will never stop until this nation goes in and stops it. The sooner we get about it the better."

"I agree with you. But, as to Ben, I hope you will be lenient."

"And I promise you that I will punish him to the full extent of my authority."

The captain was resolute, so Hal had to let it go that way.

When he left the officer's room he went up to the next floor to see Chick. The boy gazed at him with unrecognizing eyes. Whether he saw him at all or not is quite uncertain. But his shriveled and colorless lips were incessantly moving.

"He babbles night and day," said Miss Anderson, "mostly about Company E and his duties at the armory. He boasts that he is now a regular member of the company. He says you got him in. You are his hero, Lieutenant McCormack. He



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never tired of talking about you when his mind was clear. Even now yours is the name most frequently on his lips."

"Poor fellow!" replied Hal. "I am glad he has the satisfaction of believing that he has been admitted to membership in the company. It was almost his lifelong ambition to be a Guardsman."

"Well, he is one now to all intents and purposes. He says he must make haste to get well in order that he may return to his duties. His great fear and concern seem to be that the soldiers will go across the sea to fight, and that on account of his illness he will be left behind. If he were to believe that such a thing had happened it would absolutely break his heart."

Hal looked down on the gray face and unseeing eyes.

"It will never happen," he said.

When he heard the sound of his own name issue feebly from the murmuring lips he bent his head to listen.

"Yes, he got me in," said the boy. "These are my khakis. That's my gun. I drill; I march—I'll go with 'em across the sea—an' fight. Yes, that's my flag; the 'red, white an' blue.'" He paused for a moment and then continued: "Was that taps? Well, I'm ready—I'm tired."

He turned his head on the pillow as if to go to



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rest. Hal took the unresponsive hand and pressed it gently, gazed, for a moment, with wet eyes, into the pinched, pathetic face, and came away.

## CHAPTER XVIII

**T**HREE days after Lieutenant McCormack's interview with Captain Murray, First Sergeant Barriscale, in pursuance of notice duly received, presented himself before his commanding officer, in his room at the hospital, for admonition and punishment in accordance with the Army Regulations. There was no bravado in his bearing, no attempt at bluster or denial.

"I suppose I may as well plead guilty to the charges," he said, "and take what's coming to me."

Captain Murray looked up at him in astonishment. What had become of the boastful, self-satisfied scion of a wealthy family as he had known him scarcely three weeks before? He had expected to deal with a stubborn, defiant, aggressive offender; but here came a modest, pliant, soldierly young fellow, freely acknowledging his offense, and willing to pay the penalty. It was a strange circumstance. It changed materially the aspect of affairs. It set the captain to thinking.

"But there are no charges," he said at last. "McCormack refused to file any."

"Refused—to file any?"

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Barriscale looked up at him with incredulous eyes. He could not understand it. Why had not McCormack taken advantage of so rich an opportunity, so just an occasion, to even up a score that had been running lopsided for years?

"Yes. He doesn't want you court-martialed. I'm not particularly eager for it myself. We've had enough of court-martialing in Company E for the present. So I decided to call you before me instead for admonition and punishment under the Army Regulations."

"But, Captain, mine was a court-martial offense, not a case for a summary court. I'm not asking for any clemency. I'm guilty, and I'm ready to take my medicine."

"And I mean to give it to you. But I don't quite understand your attitude. I supposed you'd put up a fight. What's come over you?"

"I don't know, Captain Murray. I experienced a sort of change of heart that Sunday morning. I looked around me, and realized what McCormack had done; that our plant was saved, that the flag was still flying, that the mob had been dispersed, and that through it all I had been neither a patriot, a soldier nor a gentleman; but simply an unmitigated fool. I think that was the end of one phase of my life, and the beginning of another. Now I want to start right, and starting right means adequate punishment for misdeeds."

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"I see. That's splendid! That's the right way to look at it. I congratulate you!" The captain's hand moved across the counterpane, found Ben's, grasped it and held fast to it. "But there'll be no court-martial. That's settled. And as for the punishment, I had thought to reduce you to the ranks. It's the most I could do, anyway. But, in your present state of mind, I—I think I'd rather have you on the right of the line. So I'll just order you back to your post."

Barriscale sprang to his feet, his cheeks glowing and his eyes wide with apprehension. Again it was the old fire of impetuosity that broke out in him.

"I protest!" he exclaimed. "That wouldn't be right. It wouldn't be fair to McCormack, nor just to the boys in the company. If I were to obey such an order I'd do it at the loss of every vestige of self-respect. Captain, don't do that, I beg of you! At least reduce me to the ranks."

Captain Murray, looking searchingly into his first sergeant's face, saw that he was both sincere and determined.

"Very well," he said; "back to the ranks you go."

As Barriscale turned to leave the captain's room Miss Anderson entered it. Her eyes were solemn but tearless, as befits the eyes of those who have just witnessed the passing of a soul.

"General Chick," she said, "is dead."

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He had died in the full belief that the great ambition of his life had been fulfilled, that he was a soldier of the Guard, and that, in the embarkation for the great war, he had not been left behind. And so his death came joyfully. He had, indeed, gone "across the sea," not to fight under any earthly flag, but to march and sing forever under the stainless banner of the Lord of Hosts.

In August following the annual July encampment the regiment to which Company E belonged was mobilized at Mount Gretna, along with other National Guard units, was mustered into the federal service, and, in October, was sent to the Mexican border. It went into camp at Camp Stewart, seven miles north of El Paso, and remained there during the entire winter. The regiment saw no active service; it was not even called upon to patrol the border.

Not that the men did not have their experiences, their pleasures and their hardships. But, what with the daily drill, the camp entertainments, the trips to the city, and the letters and parcels from home, life on the sand plains of the Rio Grande valley did not become especially monotonous. The troops would have preferred to march and fight; they would have been delighted to be with Pershing's regulars in the heart of Mexico, but there was little murmuring and there were few complaints. They were soldiers in the service of the

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federal government; they were being well cared for, it was their business to obey orders and be content.

This was especially true of the men of Company E. They spent no time nor wasted any breath in useless murmuring. They performed their duties as soldiers with skill and alacrity. Theirs became the crack company in the regiment. Lieutenant McCormack, their commander, had not only their respect but their affection. From the day of the riot his place in their minds and hearts was fixed and unalterable. As for Barriscale, the old prejudice against him had worn gradually away until he had become in fact as well as in theory a comrade. As a private in the ranks he performed every duty with painstaking care and fidelity. The old sense of self-importance had disappeared; he was simply Private Barriscale, in the service of his country, no better nor worse than the men who surrounded him. As Brownell put it one day, he had become "really human."

The breach between him and McCormack had, apparently, not yet been fully closed. It is certain that there was no familiar companionship between them. Barriscale had made formal apology to the first lieutenant, his apology had been accepted and his offense kindly minimized, and there the matter had ended. They were soldiers and gentlemen in their relations with each other, that was all.



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Whether a bit of the old resentment still dwelt in the heart of each of them, or whether it was a natural diffidence and hesitancy that prevented them from approaching one another on what was of necessity a delicate subject, perhaps neither of them could have told.

But an incident happened one day that in its consequences brought about a change in the relations between the two men.

Plodding back from the city of El Paso to camp in the afternoon of a December day, Barriscale was caught in one of the violent sandstorms characteristic of that region. Swept, buffeted, blinded, drenched with the terrific downpour of rain, he reached the camp battered, breathless and exhausted. After three days of partial disability he developed a full case of pneumonia. The disease was not of the most severe type, however, and at no time was he considered to be desperately or even critically ill.

But Lieutenant McCormack, the company commander, deemed it advisable to telegraph to Barriscale's father the fact of his son's illness.

This he did on the third day after the nature of the disease had become definitely established.

The telegram was an assuring one, but it brought Benjamin Barriscale, Sr., to Camp Stewart within thirty-six hours after its receipt. He found his son much improved, the crisis safely passed, and the



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young man on the sure road to recovery. He remained with him three days.

It was on the afternoon of the second day, as he was sitting at the side of Ben's cot which had been partitioned off by screens from the rest of the hospital ward, that the subject of their relations with Lieutenant Halpert McCormack came up.

"I've nothing against him now," said Ben. "I've seen him day in and day out for months, and in my opinion he's a soldier and a gentleman."

The elder Barriscale sat for a moment in silence.

"I may have been rather harsh in my judgment of him before the riot," he said at last. "But I still think that his opinions and conduct justify my attitude toward him up to that time."

"That may be very true, father; but you'll have to admit that he handled the situation that day in a masterly manner."

"Yes, I'll admit that."

"And that his patience and judgment and firmness not only saved our property from destruction, but prevented much bloodshed and probably a city-wide disaster."

"I guess that's true too."

"Then why haven't we got the moral courage to acknowledge it, and tell him so, and put an end to this awkward restraint, and this uncomfortable attitude on the part of all of us?"

Again the elder man hesitated.

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"He may still be a radical," he replied; "and I don't care to humble myself before a person of that type. When this ultra-socialist germ once finds lodgment in a young man's mind, it's no easy task to displace it."

"Well, I guess he's got rid of it all right now." The invalid raised himself on his elbow and added earnestly: "You know I believe McCormack's one ambition to-day is to serve his country faithfully as a soldier."

"That's a laudable ambition, I'm sure."

It was at this juncture that Lieutenant McCormack, having come to the hospital to visit the two or three of his men who were invalids there, was ushered by a nurse into the little apartment screened off for Barriscale. When he saw that the sick man had company he would have withdrawn, but Ben called to him.

"Come in," he said. "Father's here, and he wants to see you."

So McCormack came in; not wholly at ease, to be sure, but with the dignified and courteous bearing of a soldier. The elder Barriscale reached out a friendly hand to him and he took it, and then passed around to the other side of the cot.

"Ben is right," said the elder man. "I did want to see you, and I should not have left camp without having done so. I want to thank you for having notified me of my son's illness."

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"That is a duty," replied the lieutenant, "which we owe to the parents of our men when they are seriously ill. And I think your son has been seriously, though not dangerously, ill."

"Yes; I have talked with the surgeon, who thinks his escape from something far worse than this was extremely fortunate."

"And I am extremely glad," added the lieutenant, "that he is so well on the road to recovery, and will soon be back with us. We all appreciate him and need him. He is an ideal soldier."

The words came unconsciously, almost impetuously. If McCormack had stopped to consider he might not have uttered them. Still he made no attempt to modify them, for he knew that they were true.

But the heart of the father had been touched; and if any feeling of prejudice or resentment against his son's one time rival had remained with him prior to his journey south, it vanished in this moment. Blunt and direct in meeting opposition to his will, he was equally blunt and direct in acknowledging his faults or mistakes, or expressing his gratitude or approval.

"I want to thank you, sir," he said, "for your generosity. Your conduct toward my son since the day of the riot has been more than magnanimous."

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"You are very kind to think so and to say so," replied the lieutenant modestly.

"And I want to say further," went on the manufacturer, "that while there was a time when I doubted your true Americanism, that time has passed. Your conduct as an officer has proved your worth as a patriot. You have lived up to the best traditions of the American soldier. I admire your judgment, sir, and your patience and skill, and broad-mindedness, and ——"

What more Benjamin Barriscale, Sr., would have said had not a peculiar choking sensation checked his speech, cannot be definitely known. It is certain that his eyes were moist and his lips trembled. His enthusiasm and his surroundings had betrayed him into an emotion such as he had not experienced in years. And as for his son, two big tears escaping from his eyes were coursing down his cheeks unheeded and undisturbed.

Lieutenant Halpert McCormack did not quite know what to say. He began to stumble over some awkward expression of appreciation and thanks, but the elder Barriscale cut him short.

"There," he said, "the incident is closed. I want to go up and see the boys of your company, and take home any messages they want to send. And if there's anything they need while they're down here, they shall have it if it's in my power to get it to them."

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When Hal rose to go Ben reached out his hand to him.

"There's not much left," he said, "for me to say, except to assure you, with all the heart and energy I've got, that my father's sentiments are mine."

And in that moment the old breach between them was closed forever.

On the day that Private Ben Barriscale left the hospital, a committee representing the enlisted men of Company E called on First Lieutenant McCormack at company headquarters. There were three sergeants and two corporals. The lieutenant received them graciously but wonderingly, and waited for them to declare their errand. Manning, although only a corporal, appeared to be the spokesman of the committee. He saluted gravely and drew from his pocket a formidable looking paper.

"Lieutenant McCormack," he said, "we are not sure whether or not we are violating military rules and customs in appearing before you to make a certain request, but we feel that our earnestness and good faith will, in any event, be our sufficient excuse. I hand you a petition, signed by every enlisted man in Company E but one, and as the matter concerns him he was not asked to sign it."

He handed the paper to McCormack, returned to his place and stood at attention.

The company commander, with not a little mis-

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giving, unfolded the paper and began to read it. It ran as follows:

*"To First Lieutenant Halpert McCormack, Commanding Company E:*

The undersigned, including the entire roster of your Company with the exception of one name, respectfully pray you to fill the vacancy now existing in the office of First Sergeant, by reappointing thereto Private Benjamin Barriscale who has heretofore filled the position with marked ability.

*Signed,"*

McCormack ran his eyes down the long list of names, then folded the paper and looked into the faces of his visitors.

"Are you aware," he said, "that when Private Barriscale was returned to the ranks he lost his grading, and, in accordance with military usage, should begin again at the lowest round of the ladder to win promotions?"

"We are aware of that," was Manning's reply; "but we feel that the circumstances surrounding Barriscale's case warrant the waiving of this custom. He has taken his punishment like a soldier. He has made himself agreeable and helpful to his comrades. He is absolutely faithful in the performance of every duty. It seems to us that he has paid in full the penalty for his old offense."

The company commander did not seem to be greatly interested in this plea, but he turned to

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Acting First Sergeant Bangs, who stood at the left of the group.

"Are you willing," he asked, "to waive such right of appointment to the first sergeancy, as you may have by reason of your present position?"

"Yes, Lieutenant," was the prompt and earnest reply; "I am not only willing, but glad to do it. In my judgment Private Barriscale has easily won the honor which we are asking for him."

Still the company commander did not seem to be deeply impressed with the sergeant's plea.

He asked, of no member of the committee in particular:

"Does Barriscale know anything about this?"

Manning and Boyle replied with one accord, in the same words:

"Not a word!" And Manning added: "We have not taken him into our confidence for fear he might disapprove and put a stop to it."

Again Lieutenant McCormack looked into the faces of his visitors for a moment without speaking. Then he said quietly:

"I do not think that, under the circumstances, you have been guilty of any breach of military etiquette. I will accept your petition, consider it, and consult with my lieutenants concerning it."

They saluted him, he returned the salute, and then they turned on their heels and left the commander's tent.

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Three days later orders were posted announcing the appointment of Private Benjamin Barriscale to the office of First Sergeant.

Late in March Company E came home from the border.

As the boys marched up from the station, stalwart, bronzed, with ringing steps and beaming faces, the citizenry of Fairweather lined the curbs and hung from the windows to greet and acclaim them. As they went by, Sarah Halpert, standing in her automobile, surrounded by the McCormack family, waved her handkerchief, and shouted her enthusiastic welcome. She had reason to be both proud and happy. For her old wish had been fulfilled; Halpert McCormack was captain of Company E, and Benjamin Barriscale was its first lieutenant. Captain Murray had resigned his commission, and the new appointments had come down through headquarters three days before the entrainment of the troops for home.

"Haven't I told you times without number," exclaimed Sarah Halpert, "that the boy had the stuff in him? All that was needed to bring it out was a Sabbath morning, and a howling mob, and a threat against Old Glory."











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